

DISCOURSES

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS

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TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.

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*And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.* I

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## DISCOURSE I.

### THE RIGHTEOUS DELIVERED.

GEN. xix. 29.

*And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.*

**E**XTRAORDINARY interpositions of Providence demand extraordinary attention. If God speaks, it is but reasonable than man should hear. And when he executed the vengeance to which the text referreth, he certainly spake, in an audible voice, to the hopes and fears of all the dwellers upon earth. By the deliverance vouchsafed to his righteous servant, he encouraged the hopes of such as, like him, preserved their integrity in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation: while, by the unparalleled destruction of the cities of the plain, he alarmed the fears of those who resembled them in impiety and iniquity. And although so many hundred years have passed, since that astonishing catastrophe took place, yet the history should answer the same purpose now, that the event itself was designed to do then. No time can destroy the efficacy of this salutary medicine for the disorders of the world. Virtue and vice are not changeable things; they continue still the same; and there is no alteration in the divine decrees concerning

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cerning them. Sooner or later, in this life or the next, a deliverance similar to that of Lot will be granted to the righteous; a destruction correspondent to that of Sodom will be the portion of the wicked. For, as St Peter argues on the subject, "If God, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked—the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." \*

It is with the utmost propriety, therefore, that the church, in the course of her *proper* lessons, openeth the present season of humiliation with a display of so awful and affecting a scene of mercy and judgment; that the sinner may know how terrible is the wrath of an incensed God, and the penitent be taught the way to escape it.

In conformity to so judicious an appointment, it is proposed, in the following discourse, to take a view of the whole narrative, illustrating the several parts of it with such observations and reflections as, it may be presumed, the church intended we should make upon it, with an eye to the great doctrine of *repentance*, at this time more especially to be recommended and inculcated.

In the preceding chapter, the eighteenth of Genesis, we find the holy patriarch Abraham interceding with Jehovah for sinful Sodom. And we find (such is the amazing extent of divine mercy) that had there been only TEN righteous persons in the city, the rest would have been spared for their sakes. But universal corruption brings on univer-  
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ful destruction, and Abraham himself can intercede no longer. "The Lord left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place."

Our blessed Lord, in whose name Abraham, as a prophet, and as the father of the faithful, interceded for Sodom, intercedes, in like manner, for the world, which, notwithstanding the wickedness of its inhabitants in general, is continued in being, on account of the righteous it contains, and the execution of God's counsels concerning his church. When the faithful shall be "minished from among the children of men," when unbelief and disobedience shall have overspread the earth, the intercession of Christ will also be at an end, and vengeance will be poured out on the world of the ungodly. Then he, who now "maketh intercession for sinners," will no more "offer their offerings, or take up their names into his lips." Then, that which alone hath so long stood between an angry God and a guilty world, shall cease to do so, and a deluge of fiery indignation will issue from the presence of the Lord, to devour the whole earth; even as the waters of the sea once brake forth, and destroyed all flesh, upon the removal of those bars and doors appointed by the Almighty to confine them within their channel. Let every man, therefore, be diligent to secure a part in the benefits of that gracious intercession, which is one day to have an end. Behold "the great High Priest of our profession" standing before the altar in heaven, with his golden censer in his hand, ready to offer up the prayers of his servants, with the sweet incense of his own merits, to make them accepted with the Father. Now, then, let prayer ascend from earth to heaven, to glorify God, and pardon will descend from heaven to earth, to bless man-

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kind—as we read in the epistle for the day—“Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.”

The destruction of Sodom being thus determined, Lot was to be first called out of it. Accordingly, “There came two angels to Sodom,” on the evening before the dreadful sentence was put in execution; “and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.”

Happy were the days, when celestial visitants thus deigned to descend, and converse with men, “as a man converseth with his friend.” But surely, we have no reason to complain of any partiality shewn, in this respect, to our fathers; we, to whom God hath been manifested, not under a similitude, or temporary appearance, but verily and indeed, in a body of our flesh, no more to be deposited, or laid aside, but actually taken up into heaven with him; we, to whom the word of life hath been sent by the hand of such a messenger, “the *angel* of the covenant;” \* we, to whom this comfortable promise hath been made by the mouth of TRUTH itself; “If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come, and make our abode with him.” † By his Word, and by his Spirit, Christ continually visiteth his people, and dwelleth in the hearts of the faithful. Blessed is the man, who “sitteth at the gate of Sodom,” ready to arise and depart out of a wicked world, at the moment when his Lord shall call him hence. He shall be visited with the visitation of the Almighty, instructed in the counsels of heaven, and delivered in the day of vengeance.

Upon the sight of his divine guests, “Lot rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold now my Lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and  
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\* Mal. iii. 1.

† John xiv. 23.

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ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly, and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat."

The admonition of the Apostle, grounded upon this concurrence, naturally offers itself; "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."\* It may be added, thereby Christians entertain their Redeemer, who for their sakes, was once a *stranger* upon the earth, and who therefore regards hospitality shewn to strangers on his account, as shewn to himself. "I was a stranger, and ye took me in; for inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me"†

Instructed moreover by this example of Lot, when we have the honour, like him, to entertain heavenly guests, who present themselves to us by means of the word and sacraments, in the church, let us instantly "arise," in heart and mind, "to meet them," laying aside, for a time, all worldly business, and forgetting those things that are behind. Let us "bow ourselves with our faces toward the ground," in humble and fervent prayer, saying, in the words of holy David, "Remember us, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit us with thy salvation"‡ "Turn into the house of thy servants, and tarry with us." At first, perhaps, our prayers may seem not to be heard, as the angels said, they would "abide in the street all night," and as Christ, when invited by the two disciples at Emmaus, "made:

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\* Heb. xiii. 2.    † Matth. xxv. 35, 40.    ‡ Ps. cvi. 4.

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"made as though he would have gone farther."\* But all this is done with the same intent that our Lord spake the parable of the poor widow and the unjust judge, to teach us, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."† By delaying the return of our prayers, God designs to try our love and train us to perseverance, not to reject our petitions, and to hide his face from us for ever. When Lot earnestly *pressed* the angels, they went in and tarried with him; and the two disciples *constrained* Jesus to go in and sup with them. Faint hearts and feeble hands obtain not the kingdom of heaven, which "suffereth violence," and must be taken by "an holy force." The "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" is the feast which our Lord expecteth, when he is pleased to come and dwell in our hearts. "No leaven" of hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud, should then be "found in our houses."

No sooner had Lot received and lodged his divine guests; but he suffered persecution on their account. And although he went out and spake with all the mildness imaginable to the wretches that "compassed the house about, old and young, from every quarter—I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly; to these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof;" what was the return made to this reasonable request, worded in the most humble and submissive terms?—"Stand back. This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge. Now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed fore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the door. And they smote the men that were  
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\* Luke xxiv. 28.

† Luke xvii. 1.

at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great; so that they wearied themselves to find the door."

Truth and righteousness are guests that often bring those who entertain them into trouble; and our Lord himself tells us, that, in one sense, he came "not to send peace on earth, but a sword." At his birth, "Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Wherever the Gospel was preached, it produced a commotion among those who could not bear the lustre of its beams, and "hated the light, because their deeds were evil." The world opposed its Redeemer, when he "testified concerning it, that its deeds were evil." Lot had lived too long in Sodom, and knew too much of its inhabitants, to desire the office of a *judge* among them or any farther connection with them, than was necessary. But his righteous example condemned their wickedness; and that circumstance provoked them more, than if he had really usurped the government. It was charged, likewise, upon our Saviour, though the meekest and lowliest of characters, that he "made himself a king," and endeavoured to supplant the authority of Cæsar. And for that crime, if we believe the superscription on the cross, he was executed. But the true cause both of the accusation and execution was no other than this, that, by doctrine and example, he detected and exposed a set of the vilest hypocrites the earth ever bore. Nor let the disciple of Christ vainly imagine, that the most inoffensive carriage, framed by the rules of Christian prudence, and actuated in all points by the spirit of meekness and charity, will prevent him from being sometimes accused of designs, to which his soul is an utter stranger. Would he escape the censures of the world?

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world? He must cease to convict it of sin and error; he must conform to all its ways, and pace quietly in its trammels; a conduct, which, as they well know, who tempt him to adopt it, will soon deprive him of all authority and ability to do his heavenly Master service, and promote his religion among men. So far, therefore, let him imitate the example of Lot, as to part with any thing, rather than suffer violence to be done to his divine guests. Let him guard his faith and his conscience, and trust God for every thing else. He who preserved Lot, and smote his adversaries with blindness, can save them that love him in every age, and secure them under the wings of his Providence, until the tyranny of the wicked be overpast; while the ungodly that trouble them, blind to their eternal interest, find not the gate of heaven, and come not into the dwellings of the righteous, but falling from one wickedness to another, and filling up the measure of their enormities, perish, at the last, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when "he cometh to judge the world in righteousness."

Lot, being thus preserved from the malice of his enemies, is now informed concerning the decrees of heaven. "The men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." How alarming this intelligence! No farther respite allowed, instant destruction determined; the day of grace expiring and a stormy night about to succeed it! He who

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would not perish, must leave all, and escape for his life!

But are "the cities of the plain" only concerned here? Or is not this written for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, it is written; since the Scriptures of truth, and, from them, the ministers and messengers of God, give us the same information, relative to the world in which we dwell, namely, that "the Lord will destroy this place," and will "purge away the iniquity thereof with the spirit of judgment, and with the spirit of burning." For—"Behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to visit the wickedness of such as dwell upon the earth. But who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall be able to stand, when he appeareth? His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night; and when men shall say, Peace, and all things are safe, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as sorrow cometh upon a woman travailing with child, and they shall not escape. Then shall appear the wrath of God in the day of vengeance, which obstinate sinners, through the stubbornness of their hearts, have heaped unto themselves, who despised the goodness, patience, and long sufferance of God, when he called them continually to repentance. Then shall it be too late to knock, when the door shall be shut; and too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of justice. O terrible voice of most just judgment, which shall be pronounced upon them, when it shall be said unto them, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."\* Such, therefore, be-  
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\* Exhortation in the *Communion Office*.

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ing the message delivered to mankind, may it not be said to every one of them—"Hast thou here any beside? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast, bring them out of this place;" endeavour to withdraw their affections from a world doomed to ruin, and take them to heaven with thee. In a word, give all thy relations, thy friends, and thine acquaintance, the warning which is given thee.

The injunction received by Lot from the divine persons was immediately obeyed. "He went out unto his sons-in-law, saying, Up, get ye out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." A denunciation of approaching destruction, in the midst of peace and security, appeared so very extraordinary to them, that they could not bring themselves to believe it possible, their father-in-law should be in earnest. They looked around them, and saw no symptoms of impending ruin. The city wore its accustomed face of gaiety and pleasure. No alteration was to be observed in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath. And that the knowledge of an event so important should be hidden from the rich and the great, the wise and the prudent, and revealed only to one person a sojourner amongst them—How could these things be?

They who have gazed on earthly glories, till they are grown giddy; to whom want and misery are known only by their name; who make every day a day of fulness and indulgence, sitting down to eat, and to drink, and rising up to play; such find no small difficulty in believing, that a world, so delightful as they think this to be, shall shortly be burnt up, and its beauties wither in a moment. They see that all things continue as they were

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were from the beginning; and are therefore ready to say. "Where is the promise of his coming?"\* In the polite circle of their acquaintance they hear nothing of this kind mentioned; it is foretold only by a few despised priests; and as to what these say concerning the wickedness of men, and the judgments of God, philosophers place it to the account of *superstition*, if they are Papists; *enthusiasm*, if they are Protestants. Thus it is that sinners deceive, or suffer themselves to be deceived, till the destruction predicted, falling upon them demonstrates, when, alas, it is too late for them to profit by the demonstration, the fallacy of their reasonings, or rather, the vanity of their imaginations. For surely, did not these priests "seem as they who mock," when they declare what the sacred writings authorize them to declare upon the subject, it could not be, but their words must have more effect upon the minds and manners of men, than they are generally found to have. The intemperate person who heard them, would become temperate; the impure, pure; the avaricious, liberal; the turbulent, peaceable; the calumniator, charitable; the proud, humble; the envious, loving; the liar a speaker of truth. Should the Judge of the world appear in the clouds, this would be the case. And as faith is "the evidence of things not seen," rendering them present, and setting them before us, a right belief in that article of the creed, which relates to the appearance of our Judge, would operate like his actual presence. "All men have not faith," and therefore all men do not "work righteousness." But "whether they hear or whether they forbear," Lot is to deliver the divine message to his sons-in-law; the watchman is to blow the trumpet  
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in Sion; and every Christian is to exhort his brother; after which, the matter must be committed to other hands.

The day now dawned, which was the last the men of Sodom were ever to behold. "When the morning arose, the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

Let us paraphrase this admonition of the angels, and suppose it addressed by the ministers of God to the sinner, at this penitential season—Arise, O man, repent, and be converted; break off thy sins, and escape from the pollutions of the world, while thy God calls thee, and allows thee time so to do. Perhaps the day hath dawned, which is to be thy last, and the destroying angel is even now come forth, with his sword drawn, to cut thee off from the land of the living, and consign thee to thy portion in the unknown region of separate spirits, waiting, either with joyful hope, or insupportable amazement, for the revelation of the day of God, Arise, therefore and come away.

It is observable, that Lot himself, though he fully believed there should be a performance of those things that were told him, yet made not that haste to get out of Sodom, which the case required. For "While he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him: and they brought him forth and set him without the city."

How apt is the sinner to linger, and to defer his repentance! How often is God forced, as it were, to arrest him, by sickness, or some grievous calamity, and so to drag him from perdition! And O how merciful is the Lord to that man whom, by  
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any means, however painful and afflicting, he bringeth forth into safety, and "setteth him without the city!" Let such an one hear the voice of his gracious Deliverer saying to *him* in the person of Lot, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"—Escape, O sinner, for thine eternal life; look not behind thee on the pleasures thou hast left, neither let thine affections stay upon the earth; escape to the holy mountain, lest thou be consumed with the world.

Lot, despairing of being able to escape to the mountain, intercedes for the preservation of a little city in the neighbourhood of Sodom, and is accepted concerning it, God being graciously pleased to say, "Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called *Zoar*," that is, the *little city*.

Thus, in times of public calamity, there is often some little Zoar provided for them that love God, where they are wonderfully preserved from the judgments that fall on their country and their kindred. The Roman armies, which surrounded Jerusalem, to execute on it the vengeance predicted, drew off, in an unaccountable manner, as if their design had been to give the Christians, contained within its walls, an opportunity of withdrawing to a little adjoining city, called Pella, which proved a Zoar to them, from whence they beheld the Roman eagles fly again to their destined prey, to be left no more till they had devoured it. And what is the church upon earth, but a Zoar, a little city (is it not a little one?) spared at the intercession of its Lord? Here the penitent, not yet strong enough to escape to the heavenly mountain, findeth rest

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and refreshment, and is invigorated to pursue his journey. Hither let him escape, and his soul shall live.

But let him bear in mind, that in making his escape, perseverance alone can secure him. "He that endureth to the end," and he only, "shall be saved." Of the four, who left Sodom, one perished by the way, in heart and affection turning back to the forsaken city. Within sight of Zoar stands a pillar of salt, "the monument (saith the author of the book of Wisdom) of an unbelieving soul." \* "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." † "Remember Lot's wife." ‡

The hour was now come, when Sodom, the gay the haughty Sodom, should be no more. "The sun was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." In this manner, to use the words of the above cited author, "When the ungodly perished, wisdom delivered the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell upon the cities, of whose wickedness, even to this day, the waste land that smoketh is a testimony, and plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness." ||

"As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man; § when that last morning shall dawn, and the sun of Righteousness shall arise in glorious majesty upon the earth. No sooner shall he make his appearance, than the heavens,

\* Ch. x. 7.      † Luke ix. 62.      ‡ Luke xvii. 32.  
 § Wisdom x. 6.      § Luke xvii. 28.

## THE RIGHTEOUS DELIVERED. 15

vens, being on fire at his presence, shall be dissolved, and pass away with a great noise; the earth also, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the Psalmist, in terms evidently borrowed from the history before us; "Upon the ungodly he shall rain fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be their portion." \* And it may be observed, that St John, at the conclusion of his prophecy, describing the destruction of the ungodly, referreth likewise to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, as St Jude informeth us, "are set forth for an example," or figure, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." † In the xx. chapter of the Revelation, we view the Antichristian powers making war against the church, "encompassing the camp of the saints, and the beloved city," the habitation of the great King, as the men of Sodom surrounded the house where the sacred guests were lodged. After which, it is said—"And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE (an expression plainly alluding to the LAKE Asphaltites, or the dead sea) where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." What Sodom is, the world shall be: and at the last day, when we shall arise, and look toward the place, where its enchanting pleasures and delights, its dazzling beauties and glories once existed, as "Abraham arose in the morning, and looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the cities of the plain," we shall behold a sight like that which presented itself to the patriarch,

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\* Ps. xi. 6.

† Jude, Ver. 7.

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"The smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace?"

But the same all gracious and merciful God, who, "when he destroyed the cities of the plain, remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow," when he shall destroy this place wherein we dwell, will remember the true Abraham, "the father of us all," our Redeemer and Intercessor; and for his sake, if we now repent, and believe in him, will save us, in that day, from the ruins of a burning world, and from those fires which are never to be extinguished; that so, being delivered from the wrath to come, and admitted to a participation of the felicities of his kingdom, we may there, with angels and archangels, and the whole company of the redeemed, glorify him for his mercy, through the endless ages of a blessed eternity; ascribing, as is due, to the most holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons co-equal and co-eternal, all honour and power, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever.

## DISCOURSE II.

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### THE SINNER CALLED.

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EPHES. v. 14.

*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,  
and Christ shall give thee light.*

**W**E are now in the midst of that hallowed season, when the church, by the voice of all her holy services, calleth the world to repentance, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. And if ever there was an institution calculated to promote the glory of God, by forwarding the salvation of man, it is this appointment of a certain set time for all persons to consider their ways, to break off their sins, and to return from whence they have fallen through the infirmities of the flesh and the prevalence of temptation. For though most certain it is, that sorrow should be the constant attendant upon sin, and daily transgressions call for daily penitence, yet fatal experience convinces us of another truth no less certain, that in a body so frail, and a world so corrupt, cares and pleasures soon oppress the heart, and insensibly bring on the slumbers of listlessness and negligence as to its spiritual concerns, which, unless dissipated and dispersed by frequently repeated admonitions, will at length seal it up in the deep sleep of a final impenitence. It was wisely foreseen, that should the sinner be permitted to reserve to himself the choice of a conveni-

*ent season* wherein to turn from sin to righteousness, that *convenient season* would never come; and that the specious plea of keeping every day holy alike would often be found to cover a design of keeping none holy at all. It seemed good therefore to the church to fix a stated time, in which men might enter upon the great work of their repentance. And what time could have been selected with greater propriety than this *Lenten*, or *Spring* season, when universal nature, awaking from her wintry sleep, and coming out of deformity, and a course of penance, imposed for the transgression of man, her lord and master, is about to rise from the dead, and, putting on her garments of glory and beauty, to give us a kind of prelude to the renovation of all things: So that the whole creation most harmoniously accompanieth the voice of the church, as that sweetly accordeth to the call of the Apostle, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

These lively and animating words, the peculiar force and energy of which it would be an affront to every understanding and every heart to point out, like the sound of that wakeful herald of the morning, which once called Peter to repentance, and which, daily admonishing the world of the sun's approach, calls up the inhabitants thereof, to behold the brightness of his rising, and to walk in his light, address themselves to the sinner, as to one fast holden in the bands of sleep, exhorting him to awake and look up, because the night is far spent, the day is at hand; and seem to be an evangelical paraphrase of that passage in the prophet Isaiah, which is a spiritual application of the most beautiful and magnificent image in nature, the rising  
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of the sun upon the earth, with its effects and consequences; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The text then, upon examination, will be found to imply this much, that the world, without repentance and faith in Christ, is in a state of *darkness*, *insensibility*, and *delusion*, for such is the state of them that *sleep*. We will take a view therefore of each of these particulars.

And first, these words plainly suppose the person to whom they are addressed to be in a state of *darkness*. For "they who sleep (as the Apostle elsewhere observeth) sleep in the night," which is the time of darkness and therefore the season for repose. When the shadows of the evening are stretched out, and the earth, turning away from the sun, sinketh into the shadow of death, and thereby loseth all its form and comeliness; when the veil, that is cast over the face of nature, obliterated the variety of colours which owe their being to the light, and abolisheth all the distinction of objects thence arising, introducing a joyless and uncomfortable uniformity, and rendering it impossible for any to "go forth to their labour," when "the night cometh, in which none can work," then it is, that deep sleep falleth upon man. Here therefore we have, according to the text, a representation of the state into which the soul is cast by sin, and in which it continueth, till recovered out of it by repentance and faith. "Darkness," as saith the prophet Isaiah, "covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people." Midnight overwhelmeth not the earth with a grosser darkness, than that which is superinduced upon the heart of man, when it departeth from God, and is turned away from its Maker. "He that followeth not Christ walketh

walketh in darkness," because the light of life shineth no longer upon his tabernacle. When he has lost sight of the Sun of Righteousness, wisdom soon fadeth away, and understanding perisheth, and counsel is brought to nought, and the distinctions of good and evil are confounded. And now the man, walking in darkness, and not knowing whither he goeth, presently groweth weary and faint in his mind; whence, as natural darkness bringeth on sleep, ignorance, which is the darkness of the understanding, becometh the parent of indolence and inactivity, and casteth men by degrees into that deep sleep, which is a suspension of the powers and faculties of the soul from the work of the spiritual life, as natural rest is a suspension of the members of the body from the labours of the animal life. This is the night when no man can work out his salvation, for lack of knowledge; and the world, in this state, may not unfitly be resembled to the kingdom of Egypt, during the three days of thick darkness, when it is observed, that "no one stirred from his place." Such is the condition of those, who, in the proper and exact language of holy writ, are said to sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death," no one moving from his place to go forth to his work, or to walk in the way that leadeth unto life. In this comfortless situation was the whole world at the coming of Christ; and every man, whom the concerns or the pleasures of this life keep from the knowledge of the Scriptures, and the wisdom therein contained, and so render negligent in the business of working out his own salvation, and contributing his utmost towards forwarding that of others, every such man is so far relapsed into the same situation, and standeth in need of the Apostolical call, "Awake, thou that sleepest."

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But secondly, The text plainly intimates to us, that the sinner, or man of the world, to whom it addresses itself as to one sleeping, is in a state of *insensibility*. For no sooner has sleep taken possession of any one, but forthwith all the senses are locked up, and he neither seeth, heareth, smelleth, tasteth, or feeleth any thing. Incapable of being affected with what passes in the world, regardless of every thing that relates to his real interest in life, and no longer susceptible of pleasure or pain, joy or grief, from the objects which produce those sensations in others who are awake, he becometh like unto them that are gone down to the chambers of the grave, and sleep in the dust of the earth. Wherefore the Apostle saith, using sleep and death as synonymous terms, "Awake, thou that SLEEP-EST, and arise from the DEAD." This address therefore to the sinner, or man of the world, is founded upon a supposition, that the soul, by sin and the love of the world, is cast into the same state of insensibility with regard to things heavenly, that the body is in, while sleeping, with regard to things earthly; a state in which its spiritual senses, those senses which the Apostle tells us should be "exercised to discern good and evil," are sealed up, and admit of no impression from their proper objects. And that this is in truth the case, a cursory view of the ideas transferred in Scripture from the bodily senses, as rendered unfit for their respective uses by sleep, to the powers and operations of the mind, as impeded by sins, will quickly convince us.

The prophet Isaiah, describing his wretched countrymen, in their state of apostacy and obduracy of heart, says of them, "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes."

eyes." Present the most finished and beautiful picture before the eyes of a person asleep; he sees no more of it than if it was not there. And how often are the pictures of our sin and deformity, and the righteousness and beauty of the Redeemer, drawn by the pencil of the Spirit in the Scriptures of truth, how often are they offered to the understandings of men, who yet see neither? And why? Because "a spirit of deep sleep," induced by their attachment to something in the world, that comes in competition with the doctrines or precepts of the Gospel, "is fallen upon them," so that "having eyes they see not." Go into the chamber of him that sleepeth, and read unto him a piece of the most interesting news, play him the sweetest notes on the finest instrument, or sound the loudest and shrillest trumpet; while he sleeps, he hears nothing. To as little purpose do the ministers of the Gospel preach to the obdurate worldling the "glad tidings of great joy, that unto us is born a Saviour," or the awful tidings of as great terror, that "he cometh to execute judgment on all that are ungodly." The heavenly strains of love and mercy sounded forth by the harp of David, when breathed on by the spirit of the Holy One, or the piercing trumpet of eternal judgment, waxing louder and louder on the top of Sinai, are equally unheard by him. He sleeps on still, and takes his rest; and therefore, "having ears, he hears not." Offer to the nostrils of one who sleepeth the most fragrant flowers that grow, the rose and the lily in their highest perfection, or the richest spices produced in the warmest climes: the flowers have no fragrance, the spices no odours for him. And are there not, who take no delight in that blessed person, from the comfort and refreshment he affordeth

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to the drooping soul, as well as from his matchless beauty and perfection, stiled "the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies:" who can perceive no "sweet smelling savour of life unto life," in that Gospel of peace, which is compared unto "myrrh, and frankincense, and all powders of the merchant?" Open the mouth of him that sleepeth, and fill it with the choicest honey: you have no thanks from him, for he tasteth it not. As little relish hath one in a state of sin and worldly-mindedness for those promises, which when the penitent believer tasteth, he crieth out in transport, "O how sweet are thy words unto my mouth; yea sweeter than honey unto my throat!" Lastly, a person, during the time of sleep, feels no wounds, or bruises, and passeth imperceptibly into the regions of death. And this is the very apostolical description of hardened sinners, who have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness: they are said to be "past feeling, having their conscience seared with a hot iron."\* Awakened by the fires which burn for the impenitent, they feel at last the avenging hand of an angry God, and lift up their eyes in those torments, which will forbid the closing them any more for ever.

Thirdly, It appears from the text before us, that the world is in a state of *delusion*; for such is the state of them that sleep. To all things that really concern them they are insensible, but they are earnestly employed, meanwhile, in a shadowy fantastic scene of things, which has no existence but in their imaginations. And to what can the life of many a man be so fitly compared, as to a *dream*? What are the vain employments and amusements of multitudes, but "visions of the

\* 1 Tim. iv. 2,

the night? And is not he who wasteth his time and breath in relating the history of them, "as a man telling a dream to his fellow?" Is a dream made up of illusive images, false objects and pursuits, false hopes, and false fears? So is the life of a man of the world. Now he exults in visionary blifs, now he is racked with disquietudes created by his own fancy. Ambition strains every nerve to climb to a height that is ideal, till with all the eagerness of desire, grasping at the summit, she seems to feel herself half dead by a fall that is as much so; since neither if a man be in power, is he really and in the sight of God the greater; nor if he be out of power, is he the less. Avarice flies with fear and trembling from a poverty of which there is no danger, and with infinite anxiety and solicitude heapeth up riches that have no use. And while pleasure is incessantly shifting her painted scenes before the fancies of the gay, infidelity often times seduceth the imaginations of the serious and contemplative into the airy regions of abstraction, setting them to construct intellectual systems, without one just idea of the spiritual world, and to delineate schemes of religion, exclusive of the true God and his dispensations. Thus doth man walk in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain, like one endeavouring to win a race in his sleep, still striving after that which he cannot attain unto, so long as he expects to find, a solid, substantial, and durable comfort in any thing but "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Again. Is a dream ever wandering from one thing to another that has no connection with it, and patched up of a thousand inconsistencies, without beginning, middle, or end? Not more so than the life of him, who, being devoted to the world,  
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and at the mercy of his passions, is now in full chase after one shadow, now after another; so continually varying and changing, and yet withal so uniformly trifling and insignificant in all his sentiments and proceedings, that were the transactions of his days noted down in a book, it may be questioned, whether a dream would not appear, upon the comparison, to be a sensible and regular composition.

Once more. Is a dream fleeting and transitory, insomuch that a whole night passeth away in it as one hour, nay as one minute, since, during sleep, we have no idea of the succession of time? And what is a life of fourscore years, when looked back upon? "It is but as yesterday, seeing it is past as a watch in the night." How beautifully is the fading nature of all those things, on which worldly men place their affections, set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, under this most expressive image! "Knowest not thou this of old (says Zophar in Job) since man was placed upon the earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they who have seen him shall say, where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night." \* "I was envious (says the Psalmist) at the foolish, I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish—Behold, these are the ungodly that prosper in the world, they increase in riches." † The sight at first staggered his faith, and he was tempted almost to distrust the promises of God made to the righte-

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\* Job xx. 4. et seq.

† Ps. lxxiii. 3.

ous. "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. But when he went into the sanctuary of God," and consulted the divine oracles, as we all should do, upon these matters, then he "saw the end of such men," and the transient nature of that wealth which had excited his envy. "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terrors! As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, shalt thou make their image to vanish." And was the task enjoined us, to describe that disappointment and wretched emptiness which the miserably deceived soul of him who lives and dies in carnality and worldly mindedness will experience upon the moment of her separation from the body, what words could we find for the purpose, like these of the prophet Isaiah? "It shall be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite," \* remaining altogether unsatisfied with the pleasures which he seemed for a while to enjoy. Such a state of *delusion* is the state of the world; so vain, so incoherent, so transitory, are the schemes and designs of worldly men: and however important they may appear to the projectors of them, at the time, yet most certain it is, that what the Scripture saith of Pharoah, may be said, with equal truth, at the death of every man, who has spent his days in things pertaining to this life only; "So he awoke, and behold, it was a dream!"

But it is high time to change this gloomy scene for one that is more agreeable. Permit me, therefore, to contrast the foregoing description of the state

\* Isai. xxix. 8.

state of man, a stranger to repentance and faith in Christ, with one of the opposite state, to which we are called in the text; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

And first, the sincere penitent, who really and truly turns from sin to righteousness and from the world to Christ, passes from *darkness* to *light*. He undergoes a change, like that made in man and in universal nature by the dawning of the morning, when there is a resurrection of both. For then it is, that man awaketh out of a sleep, and ariseth as it were from the dead, to behold the light looking forth of the windows of the east, and the day breaking upon the tops of the hills; at which time the shadows fly away, and the clouds, parting asunder, open a passage for that life-giving luminary, whose appearance the expectation of the creature impatiently waiteth for. The sun, "that marvellous instrument of the Most High," ariseth in glorious majesty, disclosing and adorning all things in heaven and earth. And now, the darkness is past, and the light shineth, to the end that all who are risen may go forth to their work, and to their labour, until the evening. So is it likewise in the repentance of a sinner. At the powerful call of God, whether by his word read or preached, by the admonition of charitable friends, by some happy incident, or change of fortune, by the death of others, or the sickness of the party himself—for various are the methods made use of by divine Providence for this gracious purpose—at the powerful call of God, he awaketh to righteousness, and findeth himself in a new world. He perceiveth that, through the tender mercy of God, the day-spring from on high hath visited him, to give unto him

the knowledge of salvation for the remission of his sins, concerning which he was before in darkness and the shadow of death. But now, all the shadows of his former ignorance fly away, all his earthly prejudices and passions are overcome, and dispersing like the clouds before the morning sun, the way is prepared for the Sun of Righteousness to arise upon him. By *his* glorious light, all the dispensations of God, in heaven and upon earth, are made manifest; and the man, being arisen to a life of grace, goeth forth to the work of his salvation, and to his labour of love, until the evening of his day.

Secondly, A sinner by repentance is brought out of a state of *insensibility* into one of *sensibility*. No sooner is a person awaked out of sleep, but he finds himself endued with the use of all his senses, powers, and faculties. He walketh abroad, and his eyes are blessed with a sight of the whole creation risen with him from the dead, and rejoicing in the glorious light shining upon it from above. He surveys that lovely variety which displays itself upon the face of the earth, and beholds the beauty and brightness of the firmament of heaven. But chiefly his attention is fixed on the Great Ruler of the day, who gives life and comeliness to all things. His ears are entertained with the music of the birds of the air, who fail not with their sprightliest notes to salute the rising sun; and his nostrils are refreshed with the grateful smell sent forth, in the hour of prime, from the ground and its productions. He is prepared to taste with delight the food afforded him by the bounty of God; and no part of his body is without the sensation proper and necessary for it. Similar to this is the alteration which takes place in the soul of the humble penitent, when at  
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the call of God he awakes, and arises from the dead. If the light be sweet, and it be a pleasant thing to the eyes to behold the sun, sweet to the mind likewise is the light of life, and a pleasant thing it is to the eyes of the understanding to behold the Sun of Righteousness, who bestows by his word that divine knowledge, that heavenly wisdom, which is to *them* what the material light is to the bodily organs of vision. Hereby the penitent believer is enabled to behold the wonderful works of the Lord, the mighty things he hath done for his soul, having created all things anew in Christ Jesus, and brought the world out of darkness into his marvellous light. But above all the works, he is led to contemplate, and to adore the author of them all; to look up it drearily, with St Stephen, into heaven, and see Jesus enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, enlightening and enlivening all things with the glory of his grace. And this is what St Paul so earnestly begs of God for his Ephesian converts, that being now awake from sin, they might behold the works and the glory of the Redeemer. "I cease not, says he, to make mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not

only in this world, but that which is to come : and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all." The hearing ear is another gift of God to the sincere penitent, who is now no longer deaf to the voice of his Redeemer, speaking to him by his holy word, which entereth through his ears into his heart : he heareth and delighteth in the melody of praise and thanksgiving, that music of the church, that voice of joy and health in the dwellings of the righteous ; nay, faith carries him to the door of heaven, where listening, he heareth that new song, and those everlasting Hallelujahs, in which he one day hopeth to bear his part. And now, he walketh forth in the garden of God, the Holy Scripture, to enjoy that sweet smelling savour of life unto life, which ariseth from the comfortable promises therein contained, grateful as the fragrance of the holy vestments in the nostrils of the patriarch, " as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." He hungrcth and thirsteth after righteousness, and hath a true taste and relish for the bread of life, inso-much that he inviteth all men to partake with him, in the words of the Psalmist ; " O taste, and see that the Lord is gracious ! " And such is the sensibility of his soul, that as he feels an exquisite delight in the testimony of a good conscience, so is he pained at the recollection of the least sin ; nor can he find any rest, till he has invoked the aid of the great physician of souls by fervent and importunate prayer, opened his grief to him by a full and free confession of his guilt, and received a perfect cure from his hands, by a fresh application of his all sufficient merits.

Thirdly,

\* Ephes. i. 16. et seq.

Thirdly, The penitent is translated from a state of *delusion* to a *sound judgment* and *right apprehension* of things, from shadows to realities; even as one awaketh from the romantic scenery of a dream, to behold all things as they really are, and to do his duty in that station in which God has placed him. No sooner is a man awaked to righteousness, and risen with Christ to work out his salvation, but all his former vain and unprofitable life seemeth as a night vision. When the Lord turneth away the captivity of one, whom Satan hath long bound with the chains and fetters of evil habits; when he delivereth him out of the hands of his enemies to serve God without fear; the time of his bondage under the elements of the world, and the dominion of sin, appeareth as a dream, from which he now findeth himself most happily awaked: awaked to the prospect of a bliss that is not visionary, of a real and substantial good, that melteth not into air, as the shadowy enjoyments of this world do, but affordeth solid comfort to the person who is possessed of it; awaked to follow after that honour which cometh from God only, those riches which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, those pleasures which are at God's right hand, and that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation; awaked to a steady and uniform pursuit of these glorious objects, instead of that endless desire of novelty and variety, which wearieth the men of the world, leaving them always disappointed of their hope; in a word, awaked to the knowledge and love of an inner dance in light, that fadeth not, but shall endure for ever in heaven, even when the world itself shall fly away as a dream, and the very remembrance of it vanish as a vision of the night.

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If therefore these things be so—and surely the Scriptures say they are so; if the state of the sinner, or man of the world, be one of *darkness, infirmity, and delusion*; and if such a state be not judged preferable to one of *light, and sense, and substantial reality*; let no man be disobedient to the voice of the church, which, through the course of this penitential season, incessantly addresseth every one of her children; “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Awake, therefore, thou that sleepest: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, and mind earthly things: awake, O thou Christian soul, and utter a song in praise of him who hath redeemed thee: awake, awake, put on the Lord Jesus thy strength, put on righteousness and holiness thy beautiful garments; shake thyself from the dust, and set thy affections on things above: the night is far spent, the day is at hand; cast off therefore the works of darkness, and put on the whole armour of light: arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: arise, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee the light of life.

Awakened by these repeated calls, be it our care to arise without delay to newness of life, not suffering ourselves, through sloth and indolence, to relapse into evil habits, like the sluggard upon his bed, who requireth always “a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.” Let us arise at the first admonition, because, that being rejected, God may not vouchsafe us another; and there will be more difficulty in obeying it, if he should do so. Let us therefore dread a relapse, and guard against it.

For this purpose, let us be constantly *employed* in some good work, and much of the danger will be removed;

removed; since listlessness in the mind, like a lethargy in the body, is best cured by motion, and exercise; and when temptations are creeping upon us, there is no better method of baffling and putting them to flight, than by forcing ourselves to read, or pray, or perform some other work of piety to God, or charity to our neighbour. Above all things, let us beware, that surfeiting and excess do not oppress and weigh down the heart, inducing sleep upon the soul, as well as the body. Let us be temperate, let us be sober, walking evermore as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; for all these are the works of darkness: but that darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. Thus shall we be qualified to set and keep that constant watch, which is absolutely necessary to perceive and repel the enemy, at his first approach. "What I say unto you (saith Christ to his disciples) I say unto all—WATCH." This if we do, we shall spend our day, as it ought to be spent, in working out our salvation, and not dream away, in vanity and folly, the precious and fleeting hours allowed us for that purpose. And happy, thrice happy the man, who, in the evening of life, taking a survey of what is past, shall be able to say, with an humble confidence, as his blessed Master, in the days of his flesh, said to the Father; "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" His body shall lie down in the dust in perfect peace, and rest in hope, till the dawning of the great day; when that likewise shall receive its summons from heaven, by the voice of the archangel; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

## DISCOURSE III.

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### THE NOBLE CONVERT.

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ACTS viii. 34, 35.

*And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this ; of himself, or of some other man ? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS.*

**W**E are now drawing towards the close of that penitential season, set apart by the wisdom of the church for retirement and recollection, confession and humiliation, mortification and self-denial, meditation and devotion ; to the end that having discovered and cast out our sins, having subdued pride, and extinguished concupiscence, having brought the body into subjection, and rendered the spirit tender, and humble, and holy, we might be prepared to attend our blessed Redeemer, at the celebration of his last passover ; to accompany him from the garden to the high priest's palace, from thence to the prætorium, and from thence to mount Calvary ; there to take our station, with the virgin mother, and the beloved disciple, at the foot of the cross, and " look on him whom we have pierced." The history therefore of the Ethiopian nobleman's conversion, effected by St Philip's expounding to him the liii chapter of Isaiah, seemeth no improper subject whereon to employ our thoughts, at a time when  
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the church is inforcing on us the duties of repentance and faith, by the same argument which first produced them in the heart of that illustrious person; namely, the unexampled sorrows and sufferings of the Son of God for the sins of the world; to the contemplation of which is dedicated the great and holy week upon which we this day enter; a week, spent in such a manner by them of old time, as made it evident to every beholder, that these were "the days in which the bridegroom was taken away." For now (as the ancient canons and constitutions inform us) men gave over all wordly employments, and making the happy exchange of earth for heaven, betook themselves wholly to devotion, heightened and improved by those religious exercises, which the experience of pious men in all ages hath evinced to be conducive to that end. Dismissing therefore from our thoughts the cares and pleasures of a vain and transitory world, every thing that perplexeth, and every thing that defileth, let us take a view of the no less engaging than interesting circumstances of the history before us.

St Philip, commonly stiled the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons, and next in order to St Stephen, being driven from Jerusalem by the persecution which arose at the time of the protomartyr's death, went down to the city of Samaria, and ever mindful of the commission he had received, and the necessity of executing it, preached Christ to the people there. So that the storm raised by the adversary against the church turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel, being made a means of wafting the seeds of evangelical truth to distant lands, in order to a more plentiful and glorious harvest.

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While he was employed in edifying his Samaritan converts, a fresh opportunity was offered him of advancing his master's kingdom; as indeed opportunities of doing that blessed work are seldom wanting to him who has the piety and skill to seize and improve them aright. "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert." The most unpromising journey shall be a prosperous one, when undertaken in obedience to the the divine designation, intimated by a lawful call. Nor let the minister of Christ despair, whose lot is cast in the midst of spiritual barrenness and desolation. He who sent Philip to a desert place, did not send him there for nought; since even in such a soil he raised a fair and fragrant flower, which having bloomed, for its appointed time, on earth, in the beauty of holiness, now displays its colours, and diffuses its odours, in the paradise of God; who, whenever he pleases to bless the labours of his servants, can cause "the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad for them, and the desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

This Philip knew, and therefore made no objections, and asked no questions, but "arose and went." And he who shews the same unreserved obedience to the will of his Lord, shall reap the fruits of it in this world, and that which is to come.

For no sooner was Philip arrived at the place appointed, but (the wisdom of God so ordering) behold, arrived at the sametime, "a man of Ethioe, pia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure." But what made this statesman great in the sight of God, was his extraordinary piety,

piety, which led him to the temple at Jerusalem. For the fame of this temple, diffused abroad among the nations round about, brought many continually to enquire "concerning the Name of the Lord," who resided in it, and to worship him in the court assigned them for that purpose, which was therefore stiled the court of the *Gentiles*. Among others came this Lord Treasurer of Ethiopia, who, engaged, as he must of course be by his office, in a multiplicity of worldly business, and advanced to the height of worldly honour, could find time and inclination, it seems, to take a long journey on the account of religion; thinking himself never so well employed, as when attending the city and court of the great king; never so highly honoured, as when suffered to prostrate himself before JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; "he had been to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning."

But as the tide of secular affairs, if suffered to break in, will presently extinguish the spark of devotion, though kindled in the soul by a coal from the altar; in order to cherish the heavenly thoughts and affections produced in his mind by worshipping towards the holy temple of the Lord, as he returned home in his chariot, "he read Esaus the prophet;" thereby teaching us where to look for Christ, and how to sanctify with pious reading all our leisure hours; out of the many thousands of which so carelessly and extravagantly squandered, (though God knows we have need enough of them all) there is not one, but, if rightly used, might set us considerably forward in our way to glory. How will this illustrious personage arise up in the judgment against all those Christians, who in the hours of domestic ease and tranquillity never open a bible, when he would not even travel without one in the chariot

with him. "*Sitting in his chariot* he read Esaias the prophet." A nobleman thus employed was an object that engaged the attention of heaven, and an Evangelist was sent to sow the seed of eternal life in a ground so well prepared. "Arise (says the ever-gracious Spirit of God to Philip) and go toward the south, to the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert;" for there he might behold a minister of state, sitting in his chariot, and reading the Scriptures! So ready is God to teach, when man is ready to hear.

Such an opportunity of instructing the well disposed was not to be neglected, for a single moment, by the faithful messenger of Christ. No sooner therefore did the Spirit order Philip to "go near and join himself to this chariot," but he "ran thither" instantly.

Being come to the side of the chariot, he "heard him read Esaias the prophet;" and his introductory question to him was, "understandest thou what thou readest?" A question, which every reader of the sacred books must frequently put to himself, if he would not read in vain. And happy they, who, like this nobleman, are not offended when it is put to them, but shew the meek and teachable disposition of their minds by returning his answer; "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Such will have the wisdom and grace to desire the company of those (however lowly their appearance and condition in the world may be, compared with their own) who can tell them words, whereby they may be saved. "He desired Philip, that he would come up, and sit with him."

The Evangelist being seated in the chariot, they proceed to consider the place of the Scripture, to which the providence of God, predisposing those incidents

incidents commonly ascribed to chance, had directed the nobleman; which was the following passage in the liii. chapter of Isaiah; "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."

It is obvious, at first sight, that the prophet is here drawing a picture of afflicted innocence. But it was impossible for the nobleman to understand the place, because he knew not to whom the description belonged; as appears by his asking Philip—"I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this; of himself, or of some other man?"

This great leading question in the interpretation of the Scriptures Philip will teach us how to answer, who, having waited all this time to hear his new disciple read the passage, and propose his difficulties upon it, now at length, "opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus"—may we not suppose, without presumption, in words to the following effect—

Be not surprised to find, that you cannot, without assistance, attain to a right understanding of the ancient prophecies, seeing you want that key which alone can open them, and admit you to a discernment of the holy mysteries they contain. For prophecy, being not the word of man, but given by inspiration of the Spirit of God, terminates not in the temporary affairs of this world, but extends to the eternal concerns of another and better life, leading men to that dispensation of love and mercy, which is now about to be unfolded to you.

Know then, that the prophet Isaiah, in the passage before us, is by no means speaking of *himself*, or his own private sufferings, but those of *another man*, in whom the world is interested; and who is mentioned by him elsewhere under the title of **IMMANUEL**, or **GOD WITH US**; that divine person, ordained from the beginning to reverse the sad effects of the fall of Adam, which you read of in the books of Moses, and to be the Redeemer of mankind from sin and sorrow, from death temporal and eternal. This person, the object of the faith and hope of the people of God in all ages, prefigured in the law, foretold by the prophets, and celebrated in the psalms, the Messiah of the Jews, and the desire of all nations, of whose appearing, as at this time, a general expectation prevails among both, has accordingly been manifested in the flesh, to fulfil all that was written of him; and having kept the law for man, and suffered death for his transgression of it, he arose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, from whence he sent down his Spirit, to establish his kingdom among the Gentiles, by the preaching of that Gospel which the Jews have rejected, expelling those charged with the publication of it out of their coasts.

The behaviour of this stubborn and stiff-necked people, who, as they crucified the master, never cease to persecute his servants, forces us to cry out in the words spoken by the prophet in spirit so long before; Lord, who, among thy once faithful people Israel, hath believed our report concerning the manifestation of thy Christ; and to whom hath this arm of Jehovah, this mighty power of God, been revealed, by our ministry, to the purposes of salvation?

You.

You may wonder, perhaps, what could induce them to reject their Saviour, whom they were all along taught by their own Scriptures to expect. It was the poverty and humility in which he came to visit us, so contrary to their modern proud and carnal conceits. For this being the season of his humiliation for our sins, he grew up, as Isaiah here describes him, small and of no reputation, from a family near extinct, like a tender plant springing unnoticed from its root hidden in a barren and dry land, out of which nothing eminent was expected to arise. In the manner of his appearance he had no form nor comeliness, none of the advantages of worldly grandeur, no ornaments of state to set him off; and when we saw him with our outward eyes, there was no beauty that we should desire him; his visage was so marred with sufferings more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. For the usage he met with from the world was even more discouraging than his poor and lowly appearance. He was despised and rejected of the men he came to save: all his life-long a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, his besom friend and companion night and day, during his pilgrimage upon earth. Unheeded and unregarded he walked amongst us, while we, not discerning his glory through the veil of flesh cast over it, hid as it were our faces from him, and would none of his company; but finding him despised by the many and the great, we esteemed him not, for the very reason which ought to have made him most dear unto us. For surely the griefs he bare, and the sorrows he carried, were not his own, but ours; yet we, not considering for whom he suffered, did esteem him the outcast of heaven and earth, stricken in just judgment from above, smitten of God in his anger,

and afflicted by his heavy displeasure. And indeed he was wounded, but it was for our transgressions; he was bruised, but our iniquities bruised him; the chastisement he underwent procured our peace; and the stripes inflicted on his pure and innocent body, were as balm to heal the wounds of our polluted and guilty souls. Our sins were the true cause of his sorrows. All we, the wretched sons of wretched Adam, like sheep ever ready to wander from the fold, have gone astray; we have turned from the only right way, the path of God's commandments, every one to his own evil way; and the merciful Lord, instead of punishing us, laid on him the iniquities of us all; a burthen, which the world could not have sustained a moment. He, the Son of God himself, was sore oppressed and afflicted with it; his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. But his love to man was invincible, burning and shining amidst a sea of troubles unutterable; all the waves of affliction, which broke over him could not quench it, neither could the floods of Belial drown it. His resolution to save us, like a branch of the victorious palm, received strength from the weight laid upon it. He could have commanded the armies of heaven to have attended him in a moment; but thus it behoved Christ to suffer; and therefore, the inhabitants of the regions of glory, instead of vindicating his innocence, taught the church of the redeemed to adore his passion; which, bitter as it was, (for never was sorrow like unto his sorrow!) extorted not one repining or complaining word from him. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth. He was brought to the cross, all meekness and quietness, as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers, that liveliest portraiture

ture of resigned innocence, is dumb, so opened he not his mouth, before his malicious persecutors. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; the judge of all the earth was condemned by one who acknowledged him to be guiltless; and though a person of such high and unspeakable dignity, that neither men nor angels can declare the manner of his generation, yet he shared with us the lot of mortality, and tasted death for every man; he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of the people was he smitten. He, whose title is, "the Lord our righteousness," died with the wicked, and the possessor of heaven and earth was beholden to the rich for a grave. Although he had done no violence, neither was there deceit in his mouth, for in his person mercy and truth met together, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, as one made sin for us, though he himself knew no sin; he hath put him to grief, that we might rejoice evermore, seeing he made his soul an offering, and was accepted of the Father, as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. Accordingly, the debt man had contracted being discharged, his subjection was released from the prison of the grave, and ascended into his glory, where he reaps the fruit of his labours. For now he sees his seed, the generation of the faithful converts adopted into his family, and made his children; he has prolonged his days and those of his spiritual offspring, for ever and ever; and the pleasure of the Lord, the work of man's salvation, prospers gloriously in his hands. He sees the numerous issue of the travail of his soul in those bitter pangs it endured upon the cross; and esteeming it an ample recompense for them all, is satisfied, and filled with joy. By the knowledge

knowledge of his heavenly doctrine, to be preached in all the world, shall the righteous servant of Jehovah justify an innumerable multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who like the spangles of early dew, or the stars of the firmament, shall shine evermore by communications of his glory; for he has borne their iniquities, and done away their sins. Therefore, the multitudes of the nations are given him for the portion of his inheritance, and the strong and mighty kingdoms of the world, rescued from the tyranny of Satan, shall become his; because for them, though they knew him not, he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors and malefactors, and bare the sin of Adam and all his posterity; and being hereby exalted to the throne of God, there continueth ever to make intercession for you, and for me, and for all transgressors.—

This view of things so affected the nobleman, and the love of his Saviour thus dying for him took such entire possession of his soul, that when, by the direction of the same good Providence that superintended this whole affair, "they came," as they journeyed on, "to a certain water, he said," in transport, "see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized into the name of this Jesus, whom thou preacheest? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more." How careful ought we to be to snatch, and improve to the utmost,

most, every opportunity of making our calling and election sure? How watchful, lest the day of salvation pass unheeded away, and the Sun of Righteousness set upon our impenitence and unbelief? Philip had other work in great abundance to do, and one sinner had converted the nobleman. "He went on his way rejoicing," full of joy in the Holy Ghost; and he who came from Ethiopia, Lord treasurer to queen Candace, made his entrance into it again in a far different character, that of an Apostle of Jesus Christ; for as such, the ecclesiastical historians inform us, he was commissioned to preach the Gospel to his countrymen, the truth of which he finally sealed with his blood.\* In heaven he again beholds the face of his own pastor, and father in Christ. Numbered with the saints of the most high in glory everlasting, with what pleasure do they now look back upon the time they spent together in the chariot, over the liii. chapter of Isaiah; that small portion of time, productive of so much never ending joy and comfort to them both!

And now, let us make a suitable application of this delightful and profitable part of sacred story.

When therefore we behold this great man laying aside the cares of state, turning his back on the pomps and vanities of a court, and setting out from a far distant land to pay a visit to the temple at Jerusalem, learn we duly to prize the inestimable blessings of church communion. The hill of Sion is a fair place, the joy of the whole earth. On its top, silent and refreshing as the dew, descend the influences of heaven, and the benedictions of eternity: at its foot break forth the fresh springs of divine grace, sending abroad the waters of comfort into every land. The Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation

\* Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 304.

bitation for himself; he hath reared his throne of glory in the midst of her, and made her to be the residence of his Spirit. The Lord is in his holy temple. There will he be found of such as diligently seek him: there is he to be worshipped with holy worship: there is offered the morning sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, rendered acceptable through the meritorious righteousness of the Redeemer, that sweet incense which accompanies the prayers of all saints to the throne of grace: there the light of evangelical doctrine goeth not out: and there is set forth the shew-bread of eternal life. Who can wonder at the melting strains poured forth by devout and holy souls, excluded, in calamitous times, from a participation of such invaluable privileges? "O how amiable are they dwellings, thou Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." How happy is our lot, who have not a journey from Ethiopia to take, in order to worship at Jerusalem, but hear the daily call of the church sounding in our ears; "Come unto him all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and he will give you rest." Blessed are they who know the joyful sound, and suffer no indulgence, no amusement, no employment, to prevent their accepting so friendly and loving an invitation.

Let a sight of this nobleman's great love of the Scriptures, thus rewarded by a manifestation of the Messiah to him, stir us up to aspire after the same reward, by a like ardent desire of understanding those holy books, which, when understood, will not fail to lead us to Christ. "He is the end of the law: and to him give all the prophets witness:" so that whether Philip had found the nobleman

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reading in one or the other, he would have "begun at the same Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS." And the minister of Christ, who writes after his copy, shall do well. He may not perhaps be able to explain the whole: but shall he therefore explain none? He may err in the interpretation of particulars, and fancy he finds Christ where he is not to be found; but is not this better than, by ceasing to interpret, to preclude the possibility of finding him where he certainly is? If the doctrine deduced be according to the analogy of faith, the sermon will be edifying, even although the exposition should not be quite exact, as is often the case in the homilies of the Fathers; which, with all their inaccuracies, no one can read without being a better man; because, whatever part of the Scripture be the subject, the reader is always sure to find some point of Christian faith or practice explained and enforced. But if the application of the Scriptures to Christ and the concerns of his church be rejected, because some are unskilful in making it, an argument is drawn from the abuse of a thing against its use; the opinion and practice of the church for 1700 years set aside; the Bible sealed up; and the Christian commences Jew: for what is the characteristic and fundamental error of that unhappy people, but the not discerning Jesus of Nazareth in the Scriptures of the OLD Testament? If the ministers of the Gospel would make the hearts of their hearers to burn within them, it must be by an imitation of their blessed Master, who wrought that effect on the two disciples going to Emmaus, by "expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF——" Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he OPENED to us  
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the SCRIPTURES?" Permit me to recite a short passage from the writings of the learned and pious Bishop Andrews, who thus accounts for the synonymous use of the words *prophefying* and *preaching* in the New Testament language. We (fays he, that is, the ministers of the Christian church) do prophefy, as it were, the meaning of ancient prophecies: not make any new, but interpret the old well: take off the veil from Moses's face, find Christ and the mysteries of the Gospel under the types of the law; apply the old prophecies, so as it may appear that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of JESUS. And he is the best prophet now, that can do this best."\*

But the history we have been considering recommends more peculiarly to our frequent perusal, and deepest meditations, that portion of holy writ, which was made the instrument, in St Philip's hands, of bringing the Ethiopian nobleman to the knowledge and faith of Christ, the liii. chapter of Isaiah; a chapter, no less remarkable for the mighty and wonderful change effected by it in the heart of another nobleman, of our own country. For in the sermon preached at the funeral of that extraordinary penitent, the Earl of Rochester, we find the following striking and affecting relation, "This estate of mind continued till the liii. chapter of Isaiah was read to him, wherein there is a lively description of the sufferings of our Saviour, and the benefits thereof; by the power and efficacy of which, assisted by his holy Spirit, God so wrought upon his heart, that he declared, the mysteries of the passion appeared as plain to him, as ever any thing did that was represented in a glass; so that the joy and admiration, which possessed his  
soul

\* Sermon on Acts ii. 16. et seq.

soul upon the reading God's words to him, was remarkable to all about him; and he had so much delight in his testimonies, that he begged the same might be read to him frequently; and was unsatisfied, notwithstanding his great pains and weakness, till he had learned the liii. chapter of Isaiah without book." Let us therefore at all seasons, but more especially at the present, by a frequent perusal of this wonderful chapter, recollect our thoughts, and compose our spirits, and soften our hearts, and mortify our passions, and fix our affections on him who loved us, and for our sakes fasted, and mourned, and wept, and lived poor, and died forsaken. "Let us also go, (as St Thomas once said) that we may die with him;" that being baptized in the baptism of repentance, as the eunuch was by Philip in the water, we may die to sin, and arise, as he did, to newness of life, with our understandings prepared to receive, our hearts to love, and our tongues to publish the truth; our hands to work out our salvation, and our feet to run with delight the way of God's commandments, though it lead us through the valley of the shadow of death. Thus we shall go on our way to heaven rejoicing in hope, and become patient and resigned under all the tribulations we can suffer, for our hope's sake. A mournful *Lent* shall terminate in a joyful *Easter*; and every tear be wiped away at the resurrection of the just; when we shall meet St Philip and his convert, with all those who, having performed their appointed penance in this world, are admitted to the communion of the church triumphant; to which God of his infinite mercy vouchsafe to bring us all, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, the end of the law, and the fulness of the Gospel.

## DISCOURSE IV.

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### JESUS RISEN.

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LUKE xxiv. 34.

*The Lord is risen indeed.*

OUR meditations, for this week past, have been employed on the sorrows and sufferings of the Son of God, undergone for the sins of the world. We have viewed him sold, betrayed, denied, mocked, scourged, reviled, and evil intreated, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross; from thence taken down, and laid in the grave, as a man that had been long dead; a large stone placed at the mouth of the sepulchre, properly sealed, and the watch carefully set. During the solemn commemoration of those days, in which the Bridegroom was thus taken away, the mirth of tabrets hath ceased, and the noise of them that rejoice hath given place to the penitential accents of grief and lamentation. For a little season, even the sacred music of the church hath not been heard; but her harp also, like that of holy job, “hath been turned to mourning, and her organ into the voice of them that weep;” \* while either, with one of the Maries, she hath stood under the cross, or watched, with the other, at the grave of her Lord.

But as a woman, who in her travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, yet afterward remember-  
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\* Job xxx. 31.

eth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world; with such unfeigned exultation do we on this day celebrate the second birth of the holy Jesus, from the tomb; by which he realized to his desponding disciples, in a peculiar manner, one of his own beatitudes; "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted!" Blessed are they, who have mourned for the death of Christ, and the sins which occasioned it; for they are the persons, who will be comforted by the tidings of his resurrection; their sorrow will indeed be turned into joy, when they hear that their warfare is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned; since he, who died for their sins, is risen again for their justification. Deservedly, therefore, hath this ever been esteemed the queen of festivals, worthy to give laws to the rest, to appear at the head of the holy band, crowned with everlasting joy, and hailed by incessant Hallelujahs. For now it well becometh us to obey that injunction, issued of old from the Lord, by his prophet Isaiah; "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."\* Let songs of praise, therefore, fill the heavens, from the comforted spirits of just men made perfect, of patriarchs, and prophets, and saints, upon this triumph of their God, whom they waited for. Let the inhabitants of the earth diffuse in loud acclamations the glorious name of the mighty conqueror, who, by *his* resurrection, hath procured and given an earnest of their own. Let mount Sion and all her sister churches break forth into singing, and utter the praises of him who hath delivered

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\* Isai. xlii. 23.

them from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of sin, and from the power of the second death, as well as from the dominion of the first. Let the Gentile world, and every tree of righteousness planted therein, burst out into the fruits of praise and thanksgiving for this great manifestation of the power and glory of God, in the redemption of our nature from the grave.—Such be the joy produced in heaven and in earth, among angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, by the tidings of this day, “The Lord is risen indeed.”

The province allotted me at present is, to display the grounds and reasons of this general joy, or to state evidence for the fact which gives occasion to it, namely, the resurrection of Jesus our Lord, from the dead; which being the key-stone of the Christian fabric, and the foundation of all our hopes, it must always be a task no less profitable than delightful, to establish so important and comfortable a doctrine upon its proper basis.

The evidence for the resurrection of Christ is of two kinds, predictive and historical. From the Old Testament it appears that Messiah was to rise; from the New, that Jesus of Nazareth did rise, and therefore is the Messiah.

Among the predictive witnesses, the first place is due to that ancient and venerable order of men, styled Patriarchs, or heads of families, whose lives and actions, as well as their words, were descriptive of the person in faith of whom they lived and acted, instructing, interceding for, and conducting their dependents, as representative prophets, priests, and kings; looking forward unto the author and finisher of their faith and ours, who, by dying and rising again was to exhibit to the world the divine fulness of all these characters; to teach, to  
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atone, to reign; to bruise the serpent's head; to comfort the sons of Adam concerning the work and toil of their hands; to gather, and to bless the nations. The extraordinary incidents, with which the history of these holy persons aboundeth, the frequent revolutions of their affairs from the depth of adversity to the height of prosperity, brought about by the remarkable interpositions of heaven in their favour, naturally direct our attention to parallel circumstances in the after dispensations of God, to which foregoing ones were designed to bear testimony. In this light, the history of Isaac, intentionally offered in sacrifice, and received again from the dead, in a figure; of Joseph, suffering persecution from his brethren, and by them sold into the hands of strangers, but afterwards taken from prison and from judgment, exalted to power and honour, and becoming the preserver of men; and, under the Mosaic dispensation, the history of David, anointed to the kingdom, but wading through a sea of troubles and sorrows to the possession of it; of Sampson arising at midnight, dismantling the fortifications of the city where he was confined as a prisoner, and leading captivity captive; together with the accounts of many other temporal favours and deliverers raised up to Israel in time of need, to rescue them from the oppression of their enemies; all these histories have been, from the beginning, considered as bearing an aspect to the exaltation of mankind from misery and shame to felicity and glory, through the sufferings and resurrection of the Son of God, the champion of the church, and Redeemer of the world. And considered in this view, they will always afford matter of instruction, of wonder, and delight, to the pious and discerning Christian.

In the class of the predictive witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, the second place is claimed by the Law. Nor will its claim be disputed by any one, who shall reflect, that it prophesied until John, executing the office of a school-master, to lead men, by material elements and rudiments, to an apprehension of the spiritual ideas signified and conveyed thereby, until the Baptist succeeded it in that office; who, pointing to Jesus as he walked, spake the language of its institutions, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And indeed, when, after the sacramental atonement made by the death of the innocent victim, we see the Levitical high priest arrayed in the garments of glory and beauty; when we behold him purifying all the parts of the figurative tabernacle with blood, and then entering, within the veil, into the holiest of all, to present that propitiating blood before the offended Majesty of heaven; is it possible, even though an apostle had not applied all these circumstances for us, to detain the imagination a moment from fixing itself on the great high priest of our profession; the plenary satisfaction made on the cross; his resurrection in an immortal body, no more to stand charged with sin, no more to see corruption; the purification of the church by his precious blood; his ascension into heaven, and intercession for us, in the presence of God? Again, when we read the command given to the priest, that on the morrow after the sabbath he should wave a sheaf of the first fruits, \* as an earnest and sanctification of the future harvest; doth it not immediately suggest to us, that on the same day, on the morrow after the sabbath, Christ arose from the dead, and became the first

\* Levit. xxiii.

first fruits of them that slept, the sanctification and earnest of that harvest which shall be at the end of the world; at which time he, who, in the days of his flesh, went on weeping, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, bearing forth the precious seed of the word of life, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Nor can we, it is apprehended, peruse the account of the flowering rod of Aaron, deposited in the most holy place, for a perpetual memorial of the investiture of the priesthood in him and his family,\* without being led to reflect on the ascertainment of the eternal Melchisedecian priesthood to the person of Christ, by the refforescence of that mortal part, which he drew from the stem of Jesse, and which hath now taken up its residence in heaven itself, being an everlasting memorial to God and man, of the true and availing priesthood and intercession of the holy Jesus.

Next to the Patriarchs, and the Law, the Prophets press for admittance, to deliver their testimony; for "the testimony of Jesus (as saith the angel in the Revelation) is the spirit of Prophecy."† Some of these give their evidence in the ancient way of figure and emblem; others, with less reserve, in express literal declarations. Of the former kind is that of Jonah, devoted for the safety of the vessel in which he sailed, detained three days in what he stileth "the belly of hell," and then restored to the world again, to preach repentance to the heathen; circumstances too plain and striking to need any comment, after that given by our Lord himself; "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

\* See Numb. xvii.

† Rev. xix. 10.

earth.”\* Of a like nature is that vision of Zechariah,† in which he seeth Joshua the high priest clothed with filthy garments, which are taken from him, and he is clothed with change of raiment, and other sacerdotal ornaments, denoting the purity, and glory of Christ, when our iniquity passed from him, and he arose, without sin, unto salvation. And thus again, the prophecy of Haggai, that the “glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former,”‡ is as true of the temple of our Lord’s body, after his resurrection, compared with that before his death, as it is of the second material temple, compared with the first, on account of the presence of God incarnate in the one, which was not in the other. Hosea delivers a prediction of the restoration of the church then oppressed and afflicted, in terms literally applicable to the virtual resurrection of the members in the Head of the church.—“Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; after two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”§ But Isaiah is very explicit, and saith, in the person of Christ addressing himself to the church; “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”¶ And elsewhere, discoursing of the Messiah, he foretelleth expressly, that “when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands; that he should see

\* Mat. xii. 40. † See Zech. iii. ‡ Haggai ii. 9.

§ Hosea vi. 1, 2. ¶ Isa. xxvi. 19.

see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; that because he had poured out his soul unto death, God would afterwards give him a portion with the great.\* I shall close the predictive evidence with the famous passage from the lxi. Psalm. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption: thou wilt shew me the path of life;" where, as St Peter assereth us, in his sermon, Acts ii. David spake not in his own person, but "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne, he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption."

A fact of so extraordinary a nature as the resurrection of a body from the dead, predicted, as we have seen, at sundry times and in divers manners, by the Patriarchs, the Law, and the Prophets, cannot be supposed to have happened without sufficient witnesses of its accomplishment. These are now to be collected, and made to pass in due order before us.

And first, we shall cite Heaven and Earth to give in their evidence; for both of them perceived the power of their Lord at his rising, and both proclaimed it to the inhabitants of the world, by those awful signs and appearances, which ushered in the morning of the resurrection. At the time fore-appointed in the divine counsels, "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven," bringing with him a strange and more glorious day-spring, his brightness covering the heavens, and enlightening the world. "His countenance (saith St Matthew) was

\* Isai. liii.

was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ;” all purity, and joy, and triumph, and glory. At this manifestation of splendour and majesty from heaven, the earth trembled and quaked, as declaring itself unable any longer to detain the body which had been committed to it for a little season. “ Behold, there was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.” At the instant of this universal commotion, the blessed Jesus, awaking right early from that which was but a sleep to him, and will be no more to us who believe in him, left the bed of death. He arose, and came forth, almighty, all glorious, fresh as the light of the morning, as a bridegroom proceeding out of his chamber, as a strong man prepared to run his course ; and saying, or seeming to say, “ I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.”\*

The next witnesses which appear in favour of the resurrection, are the holy Angels. For as the devout women, who came betimes in the morning, with a pious but needless care, to perform the instance of duty and affection to the body of their Lord, were much perplexed at what they saw, lo, two of the inhabitants of heaven, ever rejoicing to minister to the heirs of salvation, appeared in robes of glory, and reproved them for expecting to find their master among the tombs, as if it were possible that he should be holden of death, who was to give life to all. “ Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, he is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and  
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\* Rev. i. 18.

the third day rise again."\* As if they had said, "How long will ye be ignorant of the divine dispensations concerning the Messiah, and continue seeking the Lord of life in the regions of death? He died, indeed, unto sin once, as he told you he should; but do you not bear in mind what he told you at the same time, that after payment of the debt, he should be released from prison, naming the very day of his discharge, the third day, which is now come. He is risen, as he said; and being so risen, he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him, nor hath he any farther connections with mortality." The same heavenly messengers were seen by Mary Magdalene in the sepulchre, arrayed in white, and sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The grave was now rendered a scene of joy and triumph; where Christ had overcome the sharpness of death; and where, from thenceforth, the bodies of the faithful rest in peace, under the care of heaven, till the general resurrection; when they shall become as the angels of God, and shall "walk with him in white."†

As one set of witnesses descended from above, to bear testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, so others ascended, for the same purpose, from the lower parts of the earth. For "many bodies of of saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."‡ The astonishment produced in Jerusalem by the sudden appearance of these new and unexpected evidences, is more easily conceived than expressed. We may only observe, that if this fact had not been as the Gospel represents it, it must have exposed the inventors

\* Luke xxiv. 7

† Rev. iii. 4.

‡ Mat. xxvii. 52.

ventors of the tale to utter scorn and contempt, and prove the ruin of the cause which it was intended to support.

But it is time to alledge the many appearances of Christ himself, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalene apart; to the other devout women with her; to the two going to Emmaus; to St Peter, to St James, to the eleven; to "above five hundred brethren at once;" to St Stephen, just before his martyrdom, and to St Paul, at his conversion. And so far were these witnesses of the appearances of Christ from being credulous, that they were altogether sceptical; God having in a wonderful manner provided for the confirmation of our faith, by suffering them to doubt. For not only the reports of those who had seen him were disbelieved by those who had not, but when he presented himself in the midst of the eleven, they could not credit their own senses. And when all the rest were convinced, Thomas still stood out, till ocular and palpable demonstration forced from him that ever memorable confession, MY LORD, AND MY GOD! "Thus was there no capacity of mankind, no time, no place, but had visible proof of the resurrection of Christ. He appeared to men and women, to clergy and laity, to sinners of both sexes; to weak men and to criminals, to doubters and deniers, at home and abroad, in public and in private, in their houses and their journies, unexpected and by appointment, betimes in the morning, and late at night, to his disciples in conjunction, and to them in dispersion, when they did look for him, and when they did not; he appeared upon earth to many, and to St Paul and St Stephen from heaven. So that we can require no greater testimony than all these are able to give us, who saw for themselves

selves and for us too ; that the faith and certainty of the resurrection of Jesus might be conveyed to all ages and generations."

To enable the apostles thus to convey it, the Spirit of truth himself set his seal to this article of our creed, by coming down upon them on the day of Pentecost, and bestowing on them wisdom to teach, power to confirm, and patience to suffer for the doctrine of the resurrection, until, converted by their preaching, the nations of the earth bore universal testimony to the reality thereof. For that "a religion which taught men to be meek and humble, disposed to receive injuries, but not to do any; a religion which gave countenance to the poor and lowly, at a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the hearts of all mankind; that such a religion in such an age, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the discourses of the eloquent; the power of princes and the interests of states, the inclinations of nature and the blindness of zeal, the force of custom and the solicitation of passions, the pleasures of sin and the busy arts of the devil; that is, against wit and power, superstition and wilfulness, fame and money, nature and empire, which are all the causes in this world that can make a thing impossible; this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God, is the great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it; no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it; whatsoever was for it made the religion to increase; whatsoever was against it made it to increase. If the Christians had peace, they went abroad and brought in

converts? if they had persecution, the converts came in to them. In prosperity they allured and enticed the world by the beauty of holiness; in affliction and trouble they amazed all men with the splendor of their innocence, and the glories of their patience. Quickly therefore it was, that the world became disciple to the glorious Nazarene, and men could no longer doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became demonstrated by the certainty of those who saw it, and the courage of those who died for it, and the multitude of those who believed it; who by their sermons and their actions, by their public offices and discourses, by festivals and sacraments, by arguments of sense and experience, by reason and religion, by persuading rational men, and establishing believing Christians, by their living in the obedience, and dying for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he entered upon his resurrection from the dead. \*

Thus we have taken such a view, as the usual time allotted to discourses of this kind will allow us to take, of the evidence for our Lord's resurrection, predictive and historical; to the completion of which, it is hard to conceive any thing wanting, unless it were the testimony of the adversary to the truth of the disputed fact, by the futility of an objection started to overthrow it. And with this

proof

\* Bishop TAYLOR's *Moral Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity*, republished, since this Discourse was written, by a learned and amiable prelate of our church. May it meet with the success it deserves; for no tract ever came from the pen of man, better calculated to dispel those doubts and difficulties which may arise in the mind of a believer, or to work conviction and conversion in that of the unbeliever, who can bring himself to give it a fair and attentive perusal. This has ever appeared to me to be its true character, since the hour when, with equal surprize and pleasure, I first met with it, where it so long lay hidden from the fashionable world, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*.

proof likewise the Roman guard, under the direction of the Jewish rulers, has thought proper to furnish us. "The disciples, say they, came by night, and stole him away, while we slept." The *disciples* came and stole the body! They, who all forsook their master at his apprehension, and fled; they, who from that time, had absconded, for fear of the Jews, without hope, without courage, without contrivance, became all at once subtil in counsel, and daring in execution. They projected a plan to displace the guard, break the seal, remove the stone, and rescue the body, in order to persuade the world, that their master was risen from the dead. And all this they effected, not with the precipitation of men engaged in a bad design, who feared a discovery, and would therefore have hastily seized the body, wrapped as it was in the sepulchral vestments; but with all the composed sedulity of domestics, carefully disentangling it from the linen clothes, and then depositing them in the exactest order. It is now proper to enquire, where were the soldiers appointed to watch the sepulchre, all this while? What were they doing? The answer is ready; they were asleep. Notwithstanding the rigour of the Roman discipline, and the care that would doubtless be taken to select proper men upon this great occasion, yet the disciples came and stole the body, "while they slept." But did they indeed sleep? Did they all sleep? Determine then, ye Jews and infidels, what degree of credit is due to the testimony of men concerning what happened, when, by their own confession, they were asleep! This idle tale, which thus carries its own confutation with it, could have been the offspring only of a corrupt and infatuated Sanhedrim, to whom the watch told what had happened—not that the dis-

ciples came and stole the body while they slept—but that, while they were half dead with fear, at beholding the heavens around them in a blaze of glory, and feeling the earth under them trembling from its centre, the Galilean arose from the dead, to the confusion of all his enemies. But to stifle this evidence, and prevent the report from spreading, the soldiers had *large money* given them by the chief priests (and indeed the work deserved the wages) to propagate a story so absurd and shameless, that instead of invalidating the truth of the resurrection, it is of itself sufficient to make any man believe it, who was before determined to the contrary.

If therefore the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets; if heaven and earth; if angels from above, and the dead from beneath; if the appearances of Christ himself on earth and from heaven; if the Spirit of truth, with all his gifts and graces; if the miracles of the apostles, the lives of saints, the sufferings of confessors, and the deaths of martyrs; if the conversion of the world to the faith of a crucified Saviour, without power, wealth, or learning; if the church, with the antiquity, universality, and consent of her institutions and services for above seventeen centuries, from the day on which Christ was first seen by the eleven after his resurrection, to this hour, in which we are now assembled for the commemoration of it; and lastly, if the objections of the adversary establishing the truth which they were intended to subvert; that is to say, in one word, if all the evidence which God can give, or man receive, be sufficient to prove a matter of fact; then may we evermore rejoice, and evermore let us therefore rejoice, in all the glorious consequences of the proposition in the text—"the Lord is risen indeed."

## DISCOURSE V.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

PHIL. iii. 20, 21.

*From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.*

THE text treats of a most amazing change to be one day wrought in the bodies of men, as also of the person who is to effect it, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed, "we trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel from all his troubles." But are we "strangers in Jerusalem, and know not the things that have come to pass there within these days;" that this same Jesus, falsely accused, through envy, by the nobles of Judah, has been cast into the den of lions, with a stone brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed with a signet, that the purpose might not be changed concerning him,\* nor any possibility remain of his escaping from thence? In this state, he is by no means able to perform the great work, ascribed to him in the text. For it must be observed, that though he be indeed God over all, he is not the *Saviour*, without his *Humanity*. Though the raising the dead be an act of Omnipotence.

\* Dan. vi. 17.

tence, and consequently one which must be wrought by his Divinity, yet it is not Jesus Christ that does it, unless the Divinity does it in Jesus. And thus the text runs—"We look for the Saviour, *the Lord Jesus.*" But from whence do we look for him? From the sepulchre? No: from heaven; "Our conversation is in *heaven*, from whence we look for the Saviour." Surely then "the God whom he served has delivered him from the power of the lions."\* Surely "the king has sent and delivered him, the prince of the people has let him go free:"† "He is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and he is delivered,"‡ and fled away towards heaven. For how should a person, once laid in the grave, come from heaven, unless he were first risen, and ascended thither? Four days ago he was carried captive into the kingdom of death, and confined in that strong city, the grave; and now we look for him to come from heaven. For thus doth the prophet Isaiah most magnificently describe him returning to his capital, from the land of the enemy, after his passion; "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I who speak in righteousness mighty to save."|| Well therefore may we "look for the Saviour from heaven," for there most certainly he is. And from thence, as the text affirms, he shall as certainly come, to raise us. He who died on the cross to redeem, who rose from the sepulchre to justify, and who sent his Spirit from heaven to sanctify our souls, he, even he, shall come to glorify our bodies, and finish his work. And then shall

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\* Dan. vi. 22, 27.

† Ps. cxxxiv. 7.

† Ps. cv. 20.

|| Isai. lxiii. 1.

we hear from the throne the voice of mighty thunders, saying, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the water of life freely." May we not therefore address the world in the words of Moses' divine Song, and say, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and he will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of his mouth. His doctrine shall drop as the rain, and his speech shall distil as the dew;"\* for, as it is elsewhere written, his "dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."† The dew, like himself, arises from earth, but we look for it from heaven; "whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

Let us then consider Christ coming from heaven as a *Saviour*.

Man consists of two parts, both of which stand in need of a Saviour, because both fell, and became subject to the destroyer. The salvation here spoken of is plainly the salvation of the body, not excluding that of the soul, but perfective of it. For if Christ be here denominated a Saviour, because he comes to change the body, then is he here spoken of as the Saviour of the body, which he comes to change. Now, a Saviour is one that delivers us from our enemies, as it is written—"he hath raised up an horn of *salvation* for us,—that we should be saved from our enemies."‡ But the enemy that destroys the body is death, and therefore the body cannot be saved from that enemy without a resurrection, nor can Christ be its Saviour, unless he

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\* Deut. xxxii. 2. † Isai. xxvi. 19. ‡ Luke i. 69—71.

raise it from the dead. But the apostle here styles him the Saviour, with respect to the body; therefore he will be its "resurrection and its life, and whosoever believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Indeed, the work of redemption is left unfinished, if this be not the case. For notwithstanding the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together, until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."\* This, and this only, crowns and makes effectual the labours of the Redeemer. "For this end (says the apostle) Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead, and of the living."† And again, "he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead."‡ Christ was incarnate that he might rise, he arose that he might ascend, he ascended that he might take possession of his kingdom, and he took possession of his kingdom that he might raise the dead, and judge the world. "The God of our fathers (says St Peter) raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, him hath God exalted with his right hand"—for what end?—"To be a prince, and a Saviour."§ He therefore that "has done so great things for us already, whereof we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice," will never leave us in our enemy's hand, but "shall reign till he has put all enemies under his feet;" and we know, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is DEATH."

Again.

\* Rom. viii. 23.

† Rom. xiv. 9.

‡ Acts xviii. 35.

§ Acts v. 30.

Again. He who is eternal truth, and who promised to raise Christ, has promised to raise us. He has fulfilled one part of his promise, and therefore will accomplish the other.

Nor is this all. But such is the intimate union between Christ and us, that his resurrection in effect is ours: and we are looked upon by our heavenly Father as already risen in his beloved Son. For we must consider Christ as suffering and rising, not for himself alone, but for us. We must not view him as a private person, as a single individual, but as the representative and substitute of human nature, and of all the persons in that nature; we must view him as the second Adam, containing in his loins all who are or shall be born of the will of God, of incorruptible seed, by spiritual regeneration; as in the loins of the first Adam lay all his posterity, afterwards born of the will of man, of corruptible seed, by natural generation. In this capacity, as surety and father of us all, he entered the grave, and lay under the arrest of death, for our sin; and in this capacity he arose from the grave, and came forth, for our justification; that as "IN Adam all died, even so IN Christ should all be made alive." The words, therefore, which he spake, are fulfilled; "Because I live, ye shall live also." \* For if Christ be risen in our nature, then our nature is risen in Christ; and if our nature be risen, then they who partake of that nature shall rise too. We are, as the apostle speaks, *συνφυτοί*, "planted together in the likeness of his death," that we may grow together "in the likeness of his resurrection." *I*se *for* us, and we *in* him; that "the same Spirit which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, may also quicken our mortal bodies." †

For

\* John xiv. 19.

† Rom. viii. 11.

For who amongst us ever heard of a living head joined to dead members? Now that he is joined to us is most certain. For when the foot was bruised on earth, the head from heaven cried out, as sensible of the pain, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The head, lifted up from the waters which had overwhelmed it, drew in the breath of the Spirit of life, to enliven and invigorate every member of the body. And though the members are, as yet, wading through those waters, and being covered with the waves, live only by their vital union with the exalted head, yet have they this promise, on which they may with confidence rely—"I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men unto me."\* The Apostle observes, that "if any one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."† How much more must this be the case, when "the head is become as the most fine gold, and on it are many crowns;" when all the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ;" which Christ is "the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body." It is an acknowledged axiom, that as is the root, such are the branches. If then the root, though set in dry ground, yet through the influences of heaven, and the water of life, became full of immortality, how shall not the branches partake of that immortality which the root receives only to bestow it upon them, as it is written; "The father hath given to the Son to have life in himself, that he should give eternal life to as many as he has given him."‡ He is the root, we are the branches. He is the first begotten from the dead: therefore others, whom "he is not ashamed to call brethren," shall be begotten from the dead, and declared the sons

\* John xii. 32.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 26.

‡ John xvi. 2.

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sons of God, as he was, by their resurrection, and the power of the Almighty. Many other Scripture illustrations of the same point might be adduced; but these are sufficient. Well then might the apostle argue, as he does, in that truly irrefragable manner; "Now, if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also, which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now, is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." The first fruits are presented by the great high priest. "On the morning after the sabbath, he waved them before Jehovah." Then the heavens were bowed, and the earth shook. And meet it was, when the sheaf of Joseph thus arose and stood upright, that every sheaf in the field should make obeisance; \* that every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord; † that he is the *first-fruits*, foreshewing, sanctifying, and insuring that future harvest, which will be at the end of the world; that he is the first fruits of them that *slept*, and therefore that they who are in the graves "are not dead, but sleep;" and "if they sleep in him, they

\* Gen. xxxvii. 7.

† Philipp. ii. 10.

they shall do well." For yet a little while, and he will call from heaven to his people, saying in the words of his prophets—"Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," and let the voice of melody be heard through all the chambers of the grave: "Awake up, my glory, awake lute and harp; awake, thou that sleepest; shake thyself from the dust; awake, utter a song; break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? I will redeem them from death, I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. I am Jehovah, and change not."

But how is this salvation to be effected? The text expresses it by a *change*; "Who shall change our vile body." And otherwise than by a change from the state in which it is to one very different, the deliverance cannot be wrought; since the subject of it is a body now *vile*. In the original it is *σῶμα τῆς ταπεινότητος ἡμῶν*, the body of our humiliation. Humiliation implies a fall from some higher state. And such a fall our nature has sustained. For though the body of man was originally formed out of the earth, it was of the earth, before the curse of corruption was inflicted upon it. "God created man to be *immortal*, and made him an image of his own *eternity*." Other things were produced by the word of his power, but man by the counsel of the eternal Three, who said, "Let us make man." The workmanship ennobled the materials; the hand of the Almighty bestowed perfection as it passed upon them, and the creature rose under it, beautiful in his form, excellent in his glory, the

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most perfect image of his maker. There was no seed of corruption within, to cause disease and deformity without; no contending passions in the soul, like moths to fret and wear out its garment the body. The soul, clothed with the Spirit of Holiness, was all glorious within, and could not but communicate some portion of its excellence to its earthly tabernacle, thereby rendering matter a fit companion for an upright spirit, breathed into it from above. God made not sin, neither hath he pleasure in the punishment of it. But man chose it. And behold what destruction it hath brought upon the earth, and upon our body formed out of it. What dreadful attendants has this ravager of the world introduced! Corruption, and shame, and misery, and trouble, and infirmity, and deformity, and sorrow, and death. The soul is become a sea, whereon the passions, like winds, strive for the mastery, shaking the earthly frame with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. It is now "a body of sin;" and what wonder, that it should be a body of humiliation?" Sin has laid it low, even to the dust. Pamper it with the luxuries of sea and land, array it in gold and diamonds, it will be still the same. Only undraw the curtains of affliction, and you view it languishing upon the bed of sickness; unlock the doors of the grave, or enter the secret recesses of the charnel-house, and you behold it stripped of the world's tinsel pomps and vanities, reduced to putrid flesh, mouldering dust, and dry bones; no longer able to disguise or disown its original; brought at last to know itself, and introduced to an acquaintance proper for it, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Here then, O thou, whosoever thou art, that delightest to contemplate the dignity and rectitude of

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human nature, here sit down, and begin thy meditations. Is it thus, that virtue is its own reward? Or say, is the body no part of the man? If it be, why is it in this state? Or how is it to be changed? Men talk much of the *moral sense*. Can the *moral sense* acquaint us with the resurrection of the dead? *Reason* is placed on the throne, and her kingdom, it is said, ruleth over all. Can *Reason* discover the change of corruption into glory? We know she cannot; and when she spake upon the subject at Athens, her language was,—“What will this babler say?”

Nay, since that time, we have heard her muttering from the dust, by the mouth of certain philosophers—“How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?” With what body, O man, should they come, but the body with which they went? What body should be raised from the grave, but the body that was laid in the grave? Had we seen Joseph of Arimathea deposit the Redeemer of the world in the sepulchre, and been told, that the Redeemer should arise again, could any one have thought of asking, with what body “he should come?” Whether with the body which he had, when he went with his parents to Jerusalem, at twelve years old; or the body he had at twenty; or the body he had at thirty, when he began his ministry? Upon this subject two men, of equal abilities, might dispute, if they were to live so long, till Christ came in the clouds to judgment, and found them doubting whether he were risen or not, because they could not conceive, with what body he should rise, or how it was consistent with the justice of God, to raise and reward one body only, when, as they apprehend, he was born in one body, lived in another, and suffered in a third; because,  
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it is said, the body undergoes a thorough change in a certain term of years. This metaphysical argument, therefore, though seemingly no more than a difficulty proposed as to the manner of our resurrection, really strikes at the truth of the article of Christ's resurrection, and is calculated to darken the counsel and Revelation of the Most High, by words without knowledge: so much without knowledge, that the plain matter of fact is a sufficient answer. Jesus Christ was laid in the sepulchre, and the same Jesus Christ arose out of the sepulchre. And if it were so with his natural body, why should it be otherwise with his mystical? The Scriptures are clear that it will not. For as they who are alive at Christ's coming, are to be "changed in the twinkling of an eye;" and consequently, that body must be changed which is found at the instant of his coming, and no other; so they that are in their graves shall come forth to be changed likewise, and consequently, those bodies only must be changed that were laid in the graves. "Who shall change our vile body," says the text: therefore the vile body must be there to be changed. Otherwise it would not be a *change μεταμορφωσις*, a *transformation*, or *transfiguration*, of vile into glorious, but a *substitution* of glorious for vile. It is *this* mortal, and *this* corruptible; *ταυτο το θνητον*; this very mass of mortality and corruption. "It is sown, it is raised." The same, in short, may be said to these objectors, which Christ said to the Sadducees upon a like occasion; "Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." For if you knew the power of God, you would know that he *can* do it; and if you knew the Scriptures, you would know that he *will* do it. And if they say he will do it, all the objections in the

world shew but one thing, namely, "an evil heart of unbelief" in the objectors. For since the Scriptures (and particularly the process in Eze-  
 kiel's vision of the resurrection) plainly shew, that the body is first to be raised, and all the parts of it put together, before the change takes place, nothing remains, but an atheistical denial of *the power of God* to collect the parts, and put them together; a denial that he, who made all things of impalpable dust, and beheld the substance of the world, before two atoms of it were joined: who formed the body of man out of those created for that purpose, and dissolves and disperses them at pleasure; a denial that he can collect them again when dispersed; a denial that the Almighty can do this. Only suppose a man not ignorant of the power of God, and all difficulties vanish. For then, whether the dust lie quiet in the grave, or be blown to the four winds, or be entombed in a whale, or buried in the great deep, it is equally under the eye of the omniscient, and the power of the omnipotent. These are all his storehouses and repositories, to be opened by him who has the keys of hell and death, when the sea shall deliver up the dead that are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead that are in them: when, as the same Jonas came out of the whale, and the same son of man from the heart of the earth, so the same bodies of saints, that lay down at night, shall arise in the morning. God is not unrighteous, that he should forget the body's work and labour of love. From those eyes, which have poured forth tears of repentance, shall all tears be wiped, and they shall be blessed with the vision of the Almighty. Those hands which have been lifted up in prayer, and stretched out to the poor, shall hold the palm of victory, and harp  
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of joy. Those feet which have wearied themselves in going about to do good, shall stand in the courts of the Lord, and walk in the garden of God, and in the streets of the new Jerusalem. That flesh which has been chastised and mortified, shall be rewarded for what it has suffered; nay, the very hairs of our head are all numbered; how much more then, the parts of our bodies? "This (says *the Resurrection* himself) is my father's will that has sent me, that of ALL which he has given me, *ΠΑΝ ὃ δέδωκε μοι*, I should lose nothing, but raise IT up at the last day."\* We might indeed follow the objectors to the resurrection into the cold obscure of metaphysic. But what has been alledged from the Scriptures, and the power of God revealed in those Scriptures, (the only topics of argumentation upon subjects of this nature) overturns the foundation of every thing the objectors have to offer; and it will, I presume, be much more profitable, to lay open from the Scriptures the manner in which this change is to be wrought.

The greatness of the change appears from this, that "our vile body" is to be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." Of this he was pleased to give a specimen to Peter, and James, and John, and in them to all his disciples, who, by faith and devotion, will accompany their master, in "the body of his humiliation," to the top of mount Tabor. There they may behold an ensample of this most amazing change; the power of the highest, which dwelt in Christ, diffusing itself outwardly, till he appeared all over exceeding glorious, his face shining like the sun, and his raiment becom-

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\* John vi. 39.

ming white as the light\*. Who is not ready to say, "It is good for us to be here, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, even the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?" But here we must not stay, because he did not. For though, at the brightness before him, the cloud passed, and the sun, for a little while, appeared in his strength, the cloud soon returned, and overshadowed him, and he entered into it. He descended from the mount of transfiguration to the heart of the earth, and then "there was darkness over all the land;" but he soon went up to an higher mountain than Tabor, was again transfigured, and introduced a day, which no cloud shall ever overcast more. He became, as it was foretold that he should do, "as the light of the morning when the sun arises, even a morning without clouds."† The world indeed sees him not, but to us, who believe, "a door is opened in heaven, and behold a throne set, like the fiery flame, and it's wheels as burning fire, and one sits on it, to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone; his garment white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength."‡ "Beloved (says St John) it does not yet appear what we shall be;" but this we know, that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, and by seeing him, be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory." He has power, as the text informs us, to subdue all things to himself, because he is the Almighty God, and this power he will  
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\* See the resurrection of the body in an ingenious and beautiful manner illustrated from the transfiguration of Christ, by the Reverend Mr HOLMES, in his excellent sermon on that subject.

† Sam. xxiii. 4.

‡ Dan. vii. 9. x. 6. Rev. i. 14.

exert on our bodies. Yet a little while, and he will rend the heavens, and come down, and heaven and earth will be filled with the overflowing flood of the majesty of his glory, "as the waters cover the sea;" the heavens over our heads melting away before it, and the mountains flowing down, in liquid fire, at its presence. At that instant, "when the shriek of millions, fearfully crying out, shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, with the thunders of the departing heavens, and the noise of a world shaking into dissolution," at that instant, "the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed." Changed——not by the corruptible being taken away, and the incorruptible introduced in its room, but by a superinduction of the incorruptible upon the corruptible. For thus says the apostle—"We that are in this tabernacle do groan earnestly, desiring to be *cloathed upon* with our house which is from heaven. Not for that we would be *uncloathed*," or lose the earthy body, "but *cloathed upon*," with a superinvestiture of *the house from heaven*, namely, the divine light, which is to envelop and invest the mortal body, as a garment. And not only invest it outwardly, as a garment, but by the divine energy of its almighty power, penetrate and pierce through and through its most intimate substance, till it has converted, subdued, worked, and changed it all into itself, so that mortality is swallowed up of life, and corruption quite absorbed and lost in the ocean of the all-encircling glory. Then shall the righteous be seen standing, victorious, through faith in Jesus, transformed (to compare the things of this world with those of another) from the darkness of dust and ashes, to the clear transparency of glass, the pure lustre of diamonds the inconceivable agility of light, and the perfect

impassibility

impasibility of heaven. No reasonable man can complain, that the Scriptures are not explicit enough upon the subject. But the transformation of mortality into glory is one of those things of God, which the natural man never will know, or discern. Though surely, if nature teach any religion, it is the Christian; if she preach any doctrine, it is this resurrection and change. And were not the book of nature, as well as that of grace, become, a sealed book, what man, that ever travelled with the earth, through the vicissitudes of a year, could deny a resurrection? Ask the furrows of the field, and they shall tell thee. For "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The parts of the seed cannot spring afresh, till they have been first dissolved. It is true, the husbandman soweth only bare grain; but it arises, "clothed upon" with a beautiful verdure. And "if God so clothe the grass of the field," how much more shall he clothe your mortal bodies with a glorious immortality, O ye of little faith? But why need we take the compass of a year? Every twenty four hours there is a rehearsal, in nature, of man's death and resurrection. Every evening, the day, with its works, dies in darkness and the shadow of death. All colours fade, all beauty vanishes, all labour and motion cease, and every creature, veiled in darkness mourns, in solemn silence, the interment of the world. Who would not say, "It is dead, it shall not rise!" Yet, wait only a few hours, in faith and patience, and this dead and entombed earth, by the agency of heaven upon it, shall burst asunder the bars of that sepulchral darkness, in which it was imprisoned, and "arise, and be enlightened, and its light shall come; the day-spring  
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from on high shall visit it, and destroy the covering cast over all people," and array universal nature with a robe of glory and beauty, raising those that sleep, to behold themselves and the world changed from darkness to light, and calling them up, to give glory to God, and think of the resurrection. Happy are they, who make this use of it. God shall help them, when that morning appeareth, of which every morning has been to them a blessed prelude; to such, day unto day uttereth the word of the everlasting Gospel, and night unto night sheweth the knowledge of salvation. They understand how "the heavens declare the glory of God" in the felicity of his chosen, and furnish us with some ideas of our approaching glorification. Nothing earthly can fully represent that which is changed from earthly to heavenly, for the "glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." There is one glory of the Sun of Righteousness, another glory of the moon, his church, walking in the brightness she receives from him, and another glory of the stars, his saints; for here also, one star differeth from another star in glory. All stand in their order, in shining circles, round the throne of the Sun. There these morning stars sing together unto the Lord a new song, and all the sons of God, even the children of the resurrection, shout for joy; for they rest not day or night, making one sound to be heard through all the heavenly courts—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Heaven and earth

earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high!

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, seeing these our bodies are to become instruments of glory hereafter, how ought they to be instruments of grace here? for grace is the dawn of glory, as glory is the meridian of grace. Seeing we are to have such bodies, what ought our souls to be, for whom such bodies are prepared? And how ought we to spend our short moment of probation in "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!" The consideration of our glorious change cannot but make our hearts to burn within us. And then is the time to reflect, that blessed is he, whose soul is changed from grace to grace, for his body shall be changed from glory to glory. And if the soul of a Christian be ever "transformed by the renewing of his mind," it must be, not while he is in the hurry and vanity of the world below, but when he leaves the world, and following the steps of his dear Lord and master, ascends, by faith, to the mount of transfiguration, and is on his knees before God, remembering it is written—"While he PRAYED, he was TRANSFIGURED." Blessed therefore is he who breaks away from idle and vain conversation, to meditate in the law of God day and night; to commune with his own heart, and in his chamber; to call his past ways to remembrance, in the bitterness of his soul; to confess his wickedness, and be sorry for his sin. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," says the world. "Blessed are they that mourn," says he whom the world crucified. Let those, therefore, who enjoy a life of perfect leisure, and are continually complaining how heavy time hangs upon their hands, consider whether they could

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could tell, if God should call upon them at this moment, when they ever freely and voluntarily withdrew for one hour, to attend the business of changing their souls from sin to righteousness, that so their bodies may be changed from dust to glory. And if this question, from the mouth of the all-seeing judge, will strike the unprofitable speechless at his footstool, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Let us consider this, and be wise unto salvation, and in every thought, word, and action, remember our latter end. Let us remember, that "our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall indeed stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after our skin, worms destroy this body, yet in this flesh shall we see God." And may we so "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," by the eye of faith, that when we see him as he is, he may "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

## DISCOURSE VI.

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### THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

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EPHES. iv. 7.

*Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

THE church, having in the course of her holy offices led us through all the different stages of the life of Christ, from his advent in the flesh to his death on the cross, and from thence to his glorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension, has now at length brought us to the celebration of that joyful festival, wherein she proposes to our meditation the blessed fruit and crown of her Redeemer's labours, the effusion of the Spirit from on high. And with good reason it is, that she calls us together more than once to contemplate this greatest of God's mercies, from which alone we derive all our power and ability to contemplate the least of them. For though it was Christ who died, and rose, and ascended, it was the Spirit that proclaimed the news of his having done so to the world; though it was Christ who wrought our salvation, it was the Spirit that communicated the knowledge of it to the sons of men, and makes that knowledge effectual in their hearts. To his descent we owe the publication of the glad tidings, and the conversion of the nations that were once "afar off", but are now made nigh by the blood of

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Jesus,\* having access by one Spirit to the Father."† They that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth have been struck with an holy fear and reverential awe at the signs and miracles of Jesus, and from thence have been heard songs, even Glory to the righteous Redeemer and Judge of the world; since even these isles of the Gentiles sing the praises of Jehovah, and glorify the Lord God of Israel in his church, as it is at this day.

"Every good and perfect gift (saith St James) is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The variableness and the shadow of turning are only in man. The Father of lights, like his glorious representative the sun, shines evermore with the same unvarying brightness and benignity, sending down his good and perfect gifts, as the sun does his light, on all. At the beginning, when God had finished his wonderful and glorious works, and pronounced them to be good, he made a deed of gift of the whole to his creature man, who might have continued, as he was placed, in the light of his heavenly Father's countenance. But by sin man turned away from God, as the earth does from the sun; and therefore, stripped of all the good and perfect gifts of glory and beauty, he sat desolate and disconsolate, in the shadow of death.

Sin having thus occasioned a general forfeiture, man has now more reason than ever to acknowledge every good thing he enjoys to be a free *gift* of God, coming down from above. And accordingly, we find, that a right notion of this matter is one of the marks which characterize a believer, and distinguish him from a man of the world. The one speaks of *possessing* as his own, what the other acknowledges

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\* Ephes. ii. 13.

† Ephes. vi. 18.

to have *received* from God. "Soul, faith the carnal worldling in the Gospel, thou hast goods laid up for many years."\* "What hast thou, faith St Paul, that thou didst not receive?"† The language of Esau is, "I have enough."‡ Jacob speaks in another stile; "The good things which God hath given me."§ Pilate interrogates Christ, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee?"¶ Christ replies to him, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."¶ The same may be said with regard to the internal goods of the mind, as well as the external advantages of body, or fortune. The heathen, who knows not God, or his gifts, calls his supposed virtue *Εξς*, a *habit*, an acquisition of his own; the Christian speaks of his real holiness in no other stile than that of *δωρεα*, or *δωρεμα*, a *gift* from God.

And this gift of holiness, or of the Spirit, whose title is the Holy One, was indeed the good and the perfect gift, the joy, the crown, and the glory of all gifts; insomuch, that Christ calls it emphatically, "THE gift of God," saying to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that faith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."\*\* St Peter uses the same form of expression, when he says to Simon Magus, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money."†† As it came down from the Father of lights, it is more precious than fine gold, and all the things which are the objects of man's desire  
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\* Luke vii. 19.

† 1 Cor. iv. 7.

‡ Gen. xxxiii. 9.

§ Gen. vi. 5.

¶ John xix. 10.

¶ John vi. 11.

\*\* John iv. 10.

†† Acts viii. 20.

upon earth are not to be compared unto it. Wherefore St Paul says of it; "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift;" \* a gift, which no tongue of man could treat of as it deserved; so that a new set of tongues, endued with the force and activity of fire, were sent from heaven, to display and describe to the world the glories of this manifold grace of God.

But we are to consider the *Giver* of this unspeakable gift, which is Christ; "the gift of Christ," says the text. And it could be the gift of no other, because man having by rebellion forfeited the original grant, the attainer must be taken off, before the grant could be renewed. Christ only could take off the attainer, and therefore Christ only could renew the grant. And as he did renew the grant, it is plain he has taken off the attainer. He died on the cross to atone for sin; he arose from the grave to shew that the penalty was paid to the uttermost farthing, because the surety was released and set free for ever; he ascended to plead the merits of what he had done for his brethren; and he sent down the Spirit upon the church to demonstrate the acceptance of those merits, since he who pleaded them was in full possession of the forfeited riches of grace in the kingdom of heaven. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, he gave gifts unto men." † When, having overcome the sharpness of death, and vanquished the powers of hell, he went up, a glorious conqueror, in triumph to his throne in heaven, then it was, that he scattered abroad the tokens of his victory, and poured forth the pledges of his munificence on the church, for which he died to purchase them. That same Jesus who was crucified, "being exalted to the right hand of God,"

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\* 2 Cor. ix. 15.

† Ephes. iv. 8.

hath shed forth those streams of the water of life, which have been flowing ever since from the throne of God and the Lamb, through the appointed channels, to water every plant and flower in the garden of God.

I say *every* plant and flower, because "unto every one of us," as the Apostle declares, "is given grace." No member of Christ is without the grace of Christ, which is conveyed, with his blood, by the sacraments, and other ordinances, to quicken and animate the whole body of the church, as the vital heat is diffused with the natural blood, through the arteries, to support and invigorate all the parts of the body of a man. The spirit and blood of Christ are as necessary for the life of the church and her members, as the vital heat and natural blood are of for the life of the body and its members. When therefore all flesh, Gentile as well as Jew, became incorporated into the church, which is the body of Christ, the Lord poured out of his Spirit upon all flesh, and there was no age, sex, condition, or nation, that did not partake of the fountain of life freely, which flowed from the heart of Christ pierced on the cross, and which, when circulated in the church, as the blood is in the body, wherever it came, brought life, and health, and salvation with it to all flesh. In no place was its "way manifested upon earth" by the preaching of the word, and the institution of the ordinances, which were as so many vessels to convey it; but there was manifested, at the same time, "its saving health unto all nations," all being "one body in Christ Jesus, and every one members one of another."

But though grace be given to the whole body, and every member has his share, we must not forget, that every member is to have no more than  
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his share. For as "all members have not the same office," but there are diversities of administrations," so likewise must there be "diversities of gifts." For the Spirit was given in different *measure* to different persons, and at different times: as to the apostles, for establishing the church, in one measure; to the ordinary ministers, for governing it, in another; and to every individual, for his sanctification, in a third. "Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

The first measure, which may be stiled the *apostolical*, differs from all the rest in the nature of the gifts, as well as their end, and the manner of their being given.

As to their nature, it is written, that "God bore the apostles witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost\*," who was constantly with them, displaying to the world his almighty power by numberless external demonstrations of his presence, as well as manifesting his infinite wisdom by his internal operations and gifts. They had "the word of wisdom," or a supernatural revelation made to them of that wisdom of God in a mystery, the whole scheme of his dispensations in Christ. They had "the word of knowledge," or the gift of understanding the Scriptures, which contain and describe this wisdom. They had "faith," to remove all mountains that stood in their way by miracles, and to give them an holy confidence and courage, invincible by all the powers of earth and hell. They had the gift of "healing," all the diseases of soul and body by a single word; the power of working all "miracles," controlling the agency of created nature,

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\* Heb. ii. 4.

raising the dead, and inflicting punishments on the disobedient, as Moses did on Egypt, by the rod of their apostolic power. They had the gift of "prophecy," to explain things past, and foretell things future, to preach and pray at all times by the Spirit, till all things were put in order, and the church-services framed and established. They could "discern spirits," and see through all the devices and disguises of Satan, at a glance. Add to all this the gift of "tongues, and their interpretation," by which the same persons were enabled to speak and understand all the languages under heaven, without a moment's labour.

The end for which these extraordinary gifts were bestowed, was the public benefit of the church, then rising out of the nations, and opposed on the one side by the envy and malignity of the blind Jew, on the other by the false wisdom and earthly power of the idolatrous Gentile. In these circumstances "the word of knowledge" was necessary to confute the Jew from the Scriptures; "the word of wisdom, and the demonstration of the spirit," to bring to nothing the wisdom and overthrow the power of the Gentile; and all the gifts of God to cast out and destroy the works of the devil. As the church was to be gathered out of an unbelieving world, there was need of miracles, which, as the Apostle says, "are a sign to them that believe not." And this may perhaps intimate to us the time when they ceased, namely, when the spirit of heathenism and opposition was overcome and extinguished by them. These gifts therefore were given "for the work of the ministry, and edification of the body of Christ;" not for the private or inward sanctification of those that had them, who were not the better men for them, but were to be sanctified

sanctified in their degree by the ordinary means, as other men were. To prevent men from being puffed up with what is bestowed on them for the benefit of others, it should be recollected, that Saul was among the prophets, and Judas among the apostles. Wherefore Christ tells us, that "many will say to him in the day of judgment, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity."\* And so again, when the apostles, having received and made trial of their gifts, returned to him full of joy, "saying, Lord, the very devils are subject to us through thy name;" his answer was, "in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."\* And the reason is plain; for so far were these miraculous powers from necessarily transforming their minds, and renewing their souls, that they could not, like one single act of genuine repentance and saving faith, give the title to the kingdom of God. St Paul, the great converter of the Gentile world, was obliged to use the proper means of mortification and self-denial, to "keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, lest after he had preached the gospel to others," in all the demonstration of the power of the omnipotent Spirit, he, this great St Paul himself, should become a cast-away.

The manner in which these apostolical gifts were conferred, shews them to have been extraordinary, and for extraordinary purposes. For whereas the Spirit in its ordinary work of sanctification acts upon the souls of men, as his representative, the air,

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\* Matth. vii. 23.

† Luke x. 17, 20.

or material spirit, does upon their bodies, by a silent, equable, and imperceptible mode of operation, giving to all things life and motion; his coming at the day of Pentecost was sudden, impetuous, and irresistible; not in the still small voice of the common breathing air, but in "the sound of a mighty rushing wind;" and that not blowing, as in the common course of nature, horizontally, but descending directly from above; not spreading itself abroad, and diffusing its agency universally, but "filling that house," and that house only, "where the apostles were sitting." From thence indeed it went forth, by a display of its miraculous gifts, to the ends of the world. But as it had a work to perform, which never was performed but once, so its operations were such as no spirit in after-times can pretend to, without proving itself, by the attempt, to be a spirit of error and delusion: since there is as much difference between the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit at the day of Pentecost for the purpose of founding the church and the ordinary gift of grace for the sanctification of believers, as there is between that mighty spirit, which, at God's command, moved at the beginning upon the face of the deep, to form the earth, and the common air acting continually for its support and preservation.

The second measure of grace is the *ecclesiastical* measure, or that which is given to the ordinary ministry, for the standing government and continual edification of the church. This likewise is the gift of Christ, he being the fountain head of all principality and power; and it is conferred by the Spirit, who only commissions men to be the representatives of Christ, and to act in his name. Thus it is written in the Acts of the Apostles; "The  
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Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul."\* This ecclesiastical measure is as distinct from the common measure of sanctification, as the apostolical, which will be seen by considering (as in the former case) its nature, the end for which, and manner in which it is given.

As to its nature, it is a *commission*, or an *office*, concerning which it is a rule established beyond all controversy, that "no man taketh it unto himself." Internal gifts and graces may qualify a person for an office, but they cannot put him into one. No man, however righteous and holy through faith and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, can have authority to act in the name of Christ, till Christ gives him that authority. Before that is done, let his life and character be what they will, his ministrations can have no validity. Whatever he may be in other respects, in this particular he is a grievous offender, and will be found guilty before God of sacrilegiously intruding into an office, to which he can have no pretensions. A crime, for which the leprosy once rose up in the forehead of a monarch,† and

\* Acts xiii. 2.

† "When Uzziah was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, it appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before the priests, in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked upon him, and behold he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence, yea himself hastened also

and Korah and all his company (holy as they said they all were) went down alive into the pit. And that none in the Christian church might imitate the presumption of Uzziah, or "go in the gainsaying of Korah," even Christ "took not this honour upon himself, nor glorified himself to be made an high priest, (for a glory it was to him) till he was called of God," by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the presence of the people, and by the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. From that time Jesus began to preach."—Who then is that follower of Jesus, that shall offer to begin before?

The end for which this ecclesiastical measure of the gift of Christ was bestowed on the church, confirms the distinction between that and the common measure of sanctifying grace. The end of the apostolical gifts was the establishment of the church; the end of the ecclesiastical is the preservation of it, by the exercise of discipline, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments. Persons are separated from a common condition to holy offices, that by their ministration souls may be separated from the pollutions of sin to holiness of life. So that holiness of office is as distinct from holiness of life, as the cause from the effect; one is given to the ministry, that the other may be produced in the people. And though all that are in holy offices ought to lead holy lives, and it should be a part of our daily prayers to God that he would enable them to do so, yet a failure in duty is not a forfeiture of authority. The vices of a minister make not void the acts of his ministry, dominion, in

also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a feverish house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord." 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. et seq.

in this case, as in all others, not being founded on grace, but on a positive commission given by him who is empowered to give it, and continuing in force till he takes it away. - It is with an officer of the church as with an officer of the state: a mis-demeanor does not vacate his office, or entitle another to step into it. The king, or an agent appointed by him, must take it from one, and give it to another. If this necessary distinction between holiness of *office* and holiness of *person* be not kept up, the end for which a ministry was appointed will not be attained; all will be teachers, and no hearers; all governors, and no subjects; the church, as a society, will be dissolved, and a confusion introduced into the spiritual system, like that which prevailed in the natural, when "the earth was without form, and void, and darkness lay upon the face of the deep."

The manner of the conveyance of this ecclesiastical measure of grace has likewise been always distinctive of it. Under the law the priesthood was conveyed by *Unction*. And to shew how far removed it was from every thing common or ordinary, it is written concerning the holy anointing oil used upon the occasion, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it; it is holy, and shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people."\* When Christ, after his resurrection, appointed his apostles to the work of the ministry, "he *breathed* on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."† The next words shew for what purpose the Spirit was then given by his breathing on them; "Whosoever sins

\* Exod. xxx. 32,

† John xx. 22.

sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." The apostles afterwards ordained by the "laying on of hands," as their successors have done, and do to this day, saying, after the example and by the authority of their great Lord and Master; "Receive thou the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins thou dost remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins thou dost retain, they are retained." †

The third measure of the gift of Christ is that given for the personal *sanctification* of individuals. Now in order to form a clear idea of sanctification, it must be considered, that man, as a fallen creature, stands in need of two things, a deliverance from the guilt of sins past, and an emancipation from the power of sin present and future. The former of these is styled *justification*, the latter *sanctification*. The one is performed without a man, by the blood of Christ effectually offered and pleaded for him in the presence of God, upon his repentance and faith; the other is wrought within him, by the Spirit sent into his soul, in consequence, as well as evidence of its justification. Christ first made the atonement for sin by shedding his blood, then ascended to plead it, and then sent the Spirit. The atonement he made once; but he liveth continually to make intercession for us, by pleading it on our behalf; and as continually to send the Spirit to renew the soul of every sinner, who, by repentance and faith through the ministration of the church, lays hold on the benefits of that prevailing intercession, and is "accepted in the beloved." Justification, whensoever granted, must be perfect, because forgiveness cannot be partial; sanctification may be imperfect, and always is so till death, because

† Church of England Ordination Office.

cause till then, "in many things we offend all," and still stand in need of fresh justification and forgiveness: else why pray we for it, to our last breath, in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying, "Forgive us our trespasses?" And why said the holy and experienced Augustine, "that the best posture in which death can find the most perfect Christian, is upon his knees, confessing his sins, and intreating forgiveness?"

The first portion of sanctifying grace is given at baptism, which is the seal of justification, and the beginning of sanctification; inasmuch as the sinner being then sacramentally buried with Christ into his death, arises with him in the power of his resurrection, justified from the guilt of sin through repentance and faith in his blood, and renewed unto holiness by the operation of his Spirit. This total renewal, as first conferred by the baptismal laver, is stiled *regeneration*, and answers, in things natural, to the birth of an infant. But then, as an infant, though born compleat in all its parts, yet comes to its full stature and strength by slow and imperceptible degrees; by being supplied with proper kinds of food for its nourishment when in health, and proper medicines for its recovery when otherwise: so is it with the regenerate spirit of a Christian, while it is (as St Peter calls it) a babe in Christ, it must be fed with the milk of the word; when it is more grown in grace, with the strong meat of its salutary doctrines; when it is infirm, it must be strengthened by the comforts of its promises; and when sick, or wounded by sin, it must be recovered and restored by godly counsel and wholesome discipline, by penance and absolution, by the medicines of the word and sacraments, as duly and properly administered in the church, by

the lawfully and regularly appointed delegates and representatives of the physician of souls. This gradual and complex work of our sanctification is carried on through our whole lives, by the Spirit of God, given, in due degree and proportion, to every individual, for that purpose. And it is marvellous to behold (as the excellent Bishop Andrews observes) how, from the laver of regeneration, to the administration of the *Viaticum*, this good spirit helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us, having a grace for every season. When we are troubled with erroneous opinions, he is the Spirit of truth; when assaulted with temptations, he is the Spirit of holiness; when dissipated with worldly vanity, he is the Spirit of compunction; when broken with worldly sorrow, he is the Holy Ghost the Comforter. It is he who, after having regenerated us in our baptism, confirms us by the imposition of hands; renews us to repentance, when we fall away; teaches us, all our life long, what we know not; puts us in mind of what we forget; stirs us up when we are dull; helps us in our prayers; relieves us in our infirmities; consoles us in our heaviness; gives songs of joy in the darkest night of sorrow; seals us to the day of our redemption; and raises us up again in the last day; when that which was sown in grace shall be reaped in glory, and the work of sanctification in spirit, soul, and body, shall be compleated.—What Christian, that considers this unspeakable gift of God, but must say of him, with the Psalmist, “He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God?”\* Seeing every one of us may now so properly take up those other words of the same sweet Psalmist; “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the

\* Ps. xl. iii.

the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." \*

What therefore remains, but that we shew forth the thankfulness of our hearts by the holiness of our lives, and live as becometh those, whom Christ having redeemed by his most precious blood, hath sanctified with his most Holy Spirit. Seeing Christ our Saviour has bestowed such a gift upon his church, let us never provoke him to take it from us. As it is a gift, let us always be forward to acknowledge much; not attributing to nature what is due to grace, or robbing the Holy Ghost to adorn reason. As, though a gift, it is given to every man to profit withal, let us have that day continually in our thought, when an account of our profiting will be required; and let us never forget, that the same fire burns for the *unprofitable* and *unbeliever*; for him who neglects this gracious gift, and for him who rejects it. Since by the ascension of Christ the heavens have been opened, and the Holy Dove has been sent down upon the earth, let us not give sleep to our eyes, or slumber to our eye-lids, till we have prepared in our hearts an habitation for him. Let pride depart, that it drive not away the Spirit of humility; let anger be put from us, that we quench not the Spirit of meekness; and let not that which is unchaste be named, or thought of, that we grieve not the Spirit of purity. So shall we be meet entertainers of this heavenly guest, and "to every one of us will be given the gift of Christ."

But as there are different measures of this gift, let every one take care that he think not more highly of himself, or arrogate more to himself, than he ought; but let him know himself, his station, and his abilities, and think and act soberly, accord-

ing as God has dealt the measure to him. The God who sent the Spirit is a God of order, and from the beginning "has appointed divers orders in the church," and set different officers in different posts. Let every man therefore, in his own order, do the work allotted him. Let not the layman take upon him the office of a deacon; nor the deacon intrude into the function of the priest; nor the priest usurp the authority of the bishop; much less fancy himself invested with the œcumenical commission of an apostle. Good men have had occasion to lament the calamities that have been brought upon the church, from age to age, through a neglect of this important consideration; a consideration, on which is suspended the felicity of every society, in heaven and earth. When the soul of the learned, the pious, the incomparable author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* was about to take her flight to the regions of everlasting harmony and love, a friend asked him, what might then be the subject of his contemplations? He replied, that "he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven—and O that it might be so on earth!" With our endeavours let us add our prayers to his, that our eyes may behold Jerusalem, "a city at unity in itself;" a city, on this account, equally conspicuous for beauty and strength; to its friends appearing "fair as the moon;" to its spiritual adversaries, "terrible as an army with banners."

## DISCOURSE VII.

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### THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR:

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NUMB. xvi. 47, 48.

*And Aaron took, as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and behold the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people; and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.*

IT may be questioned, whether any history in the world ever afforded a finer subject for a picture, than this before us. Aaron, in his sacerdotal vestments, the smoke of the incense ascending from the holy censer in his hand, might be drawn, standing up amidst crowds of Israelites, smitten with the pestilence. The wrath of God might be represented, rolling forth in fiery waves from the tabernacle, and almost reaching the High Priest; but recoiling, as checked in its progress by his powerful intercession. On one side of the Intercessor might be portrayed the most ghastly horrors in the countenances of the dead; on the other side might be discovered the reviving gleams of hope and joy in the faces of the living, on perceiving that the plague was stayed.

But in order to enter thoroughly into all the parts of this supposed picture, it will be necessary to take a view of the whole history to which it re-

## 102 THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

lates; that we may learn the crime of the sufferers which brought on their punishment, and the nature of that intercession which put a stop to it.

Moses and Aaron were appointed by God the governors and conductors of his people. But though they ruled with the utmost wisdom and integrity, it happened, that *they* could not please every body. Korah, a discontented factious Levite, charged Aaron with priestcraft: "all the congregation, he said, were holy, and the Lord was among them;" every man was qualified to be his own priest, to instruct, and to save himself; and who was Aaron, that he should set himself up above his brethren, and lord it over God's heritage? At the same time that a schism was thus forming in the church, a rebellion was likewise fomented in the state. For Dathan and Abiram, who were laymen, and princes of the congregation, accused Moses of tyranny, and a design to establish arbitrary power; which they affirmed to be so clear a case, that unless he "put out the eyes" of the people, they must see he intended to enslave, and to make "himself altogether a prince over them." Matters soon came to an open rupture; God himself was appealed to, and a day fixed to determine the cause. And a most tremendous determination indeed it was. For when the two parties, according to order, had separated from each other, and all with eager expectation stood waiting the event, behold "the ground," which was under the rebels, suddenly "clave asunder, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all that appertained to them; they went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 103

med the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." They who have not studied human nature, who have not seen or heard much of mankind, will perhaps imagine, that such a decision as this, must needs have silenced every objection, and put an end to the murmurings of discontent. And so far indeed it is true, that "the people fled at the cry of those who suffered, for they said, lest the earth swallow us up also." But as soon as the danger was over, they discovered the real sentiments of their corrupted hearts. After a single night's rest, the spirit of rebellion again took possession of them; and, all reverence laid aside, they go in a tumultuous and insolent manner to their leaders, requiring at their hands, truly, the blood of Korah and his followers. "On the morrow, all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, ye have slain the people of the Lord." Thus, by standing up for these offenders, they shewed a secret approbation of their offence; and being partakers of their crime, they justly became partakers also of their punishment. The divine wrath therefore went out against them. "Get you up, said the Lord to Moses and Aaron, from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." A most dreadful pestilence ensued; and then it was, that Aaron did, as is recorded of him in the text; "he took a censer, with fire from off the altar, and put on incense, as commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and made an atonement for the people." He exposed himself, for their sake, to the vengeance of heaven, which was rolling on, like an irresistible torrent, and had already swept away near fifteen thousand of his brethren; he stood in the midway between the  
wrath.

wrath and them, "between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed." It stopped where Aaron stood; before him all were consumed; all behind him were saved. An action this so full of faith and love, as to deserve the admiration of all ages; so wonderfully blessed in its consequences, that it cannot but well repay the time and pains we shall employ in enquiring into the grounds and reasons of them, and learning how it should come to pass, that the intercession of Aaron should arrest the wrath of God in its impetuous course, and save from impending death the remnant of rebellious Israel. And in the prosecution of the subject it may perhaps appear, that this awful and affecting scene which we have been contemplating, as affording fine matter for a picture, is itself a picture only of another more august and interesting scene, in which all the children of Adam are concerned, and do bear their parts.

Let us then ask—Was it for Aaron's sake, that God spared the remnant of his people? Had Aaron any merit of his own, any superfluous righteousness, which might be imputed to them? Far from it; since however comparatively holy and faithful he might be, yet was he a descendant of that Adam, of whose children it is testified, that "there is none that doeth good; no not one." He, and "every high priest taken from among men," were necessarily heirs of the universal corruption; they had their infirmities, as the apostle argues, and were obliged to offer up sacrifices for their *own* sins, as well as for those of the people. Aaron therefore, of himself, could make no atonement for them; and without an atonement, the justice of God could not let them escape. To account for this wonderful deliverance, we must car-

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 105

ry on our thoughts farther; we must look to some higher atonement, some greater and more powerful Intercessor and High Priest, in whose name Aaron might act, and in virtue of whose merits he might, as a representative, prevail with God to be gracious to his people.

And here, there is but one person upon whom all our thoughts must immediately be fixed, namely, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, the effectual Intercessor for the salvation of sinners. Had we any doubt, whether Aaron, when officiating according to the law, represented *Him*, St Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, has determined the point beyond all contradiction. He tells us, that the law had a shadow of good things to come, of which Christ and his heavenly truths were the body and substance; that Aaron and all other high priests were the representatives of him who is our gracious Intercessor and High Priest for ever; that the holy of holies in the temple was the figure of heaven itself; that all which Aaron did there, foreshewed what our Lord did and does for us above; that the blood there offered by Aaron and his successors, under the law, pointed out the blood of Christ, by him offered to the Father in heaven; and the incense, which was fumed upon those occasions, to diffuse a grateful smell, denoted the merits of our blessed Redeemer, which appease the wrath of God, render all our prayers and oblation acceptable, and fill heaven and earth with the sweet smelling favour of life, peace, and salvation.

These things being understood and considered, we may easily collect, from what has been said, the reason why Aaron's intercession on the behalf of offending Israel was so powerful and effectual.

For

## 106 THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

For if Aaron, in the office of high priest and mediator, represented the world's Redeemer; and if the atonement, which he made for Israel, shewed forth that great atonement to be one day made by Jesus Christ for the church universal of all ages and nations; then God had undoubtedly respect unto that great atonement, and for his sake who was to make it, pardoned those for whom it was to be made. In the person of Aaron he beheld his beloved son, in whom he is well pleased, interceding for the transgressors; Israel was spared for the sake of Aaron, but Aaron himself was accepted for the sake of Christ.

And now, I would willingly hope, that this scene begins to open upon you, in all its glory. For surely the brightest imagination cannot figure to itself a more exact and lively representation of our sinfulness, of the divine wrath, and the mercies of redemption. Under this most affecting image of rebellious Israel, smitten with a pestilence, and saved by the intercession of Aaron, are described to us the miserable and lost state of man after the fall, the terrible execution of God's justice on the one hand, and the gracious interposition of our Redeemer on the other, with the effects of both.

Were the men of Israel sinners and rebels against their God? So we are all. All have sinned; all have broken their allegiance to their Creator and Sovereign, and gone over to his and their enemy. When we read of the repeated transgressions of Israel, with the mercies and the judgments of heaven fresh in their memories, nay even before their eyes, we are amazed and confounded, and almost tempted to disbelieve the accounts of such horrible perverseness and ingratitude. But conscience sleepeth all this while, and we stand in need of a Na-  
than,

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 107

than, to tell each of us, "Thou art the man." For who amongst us has not experienced the mercies of God; and who has not abused them? Who has not trembled at his judgments; and who has not forgotten them again? Who, in the hour of sickness and sorrow, has not made vows and resolutions of amendment; and who, in the day of health and gladness, has not broken those vows and resolutions? Alas, my brethren, our own hearts, if we do but consult them, must tell us, that the history of Israel is true, and that we all have in us, derived from our common father Adam, a portion of the same rebellious spirit which was in them. "Are we better than they? No, in no wise, for, as saith an apostle, we have charged both Jews and Gentiles," that is, all the world, "that they are all under sin; as it is written" in the Scriptures of truth, "There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes—All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Such is the Scripture account of fallen man; such are the works of which the world hath been full from the beginning, and is likely to continue so unto the end. Mankind, therefore, resemble the people of Israel in their sins. Let us next examine, whether they do not likewise resemble them in their punishment.

Did

## 108 THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

Did Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, with all their company, go down into the pit? Did a fire come forth from the Lord, and consume the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense? And did a raging pestilence sweep off the murmurers by thousands? What are we taught by all this, but the same concerning lesson, which the apostle teaches us in words, that "the wages of sin is death," and that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Forfeiture of life and inheritance necessarily followed the transgression. In Adam all died; all became mortal in their bodies, and subjected to the sentence of natural death. And not only so, but the souls of men were deprived by sin of communication with God, who is the fountain of spiritual life; and both soul and body were in danger of eternal death. When, therefore, we behold the camp of Israel in the wilderness, visited by the divine judgments; when we see some going down alive into the dreadful pit; others burnt up in a moment by fire from heaven; and a pestilence threatening to consume the rest; when we look around, and view, in every part of the picture, the dying and the dead; do we not at once acknowledge the original from which it is drawn, and discern in it the too, too faithful portrait of a fallen world, full of misery and death, because full of sin and rebellion!

But what? Must we then indeed perish? Must we all perish? "Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Is the plague begun among the people, and is there no person who can stay it? O not so, blessed be  
our

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 109

our gracious God ; there is yet hope of comfort, health, and salvation. Turn your eyes once more to the instructive picture, and there view the Intercessor making atonement, and saving the remnant of his people. Destruction was not the end for which God formed man. "For God made not death. He created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity. Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and still, as at the first, they alone who hold of his side do find it." The covenant of works being broken by transgression, the covenant of grace immediately succeeded in its room. This was the remedy provided against sin and death, and the blessed means of reconciliation fore-ordained by the Divine Persons, before the foundation of the world ; that the sinner, who had no righteousness of his own to plead in arrest of judgment, upon the new terms of this act of grace, might, again find acceptance and life, through the divine satisfaction and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. *He* was consecrated to be our High Priest, and ordained to perform an office in attempting which, every high priest taken from among men must else have failed. He had no need to offer sacrifice for his own sins, since he had none ; but being himself all righteous, was perfectly qualified to save others. Nor was his priesthood to pass from one to another, or to have an end, like that of Aaron, but it was eternal and unchangeable, as the Son of God who exercised it. Such was our High Priest, who perceived that, on account of man's transgression, wrath was gone forth from the presence of the Lord, and that the plague was begun among the people. And he saw

## 110 THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore he arrayed himself in the holy garments of glory and beauty; he put on a breast-plate of righteousness, and a robe of inviolable sanctity, and he was clad, over all, with zeal as a cloke. He was anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost and with power; and on his head was a crown of salvation and glory. Thus adorned and fitted for the work, he put on, for incense, the merits of his sufferings. He ran into the midst of God's people as a mediator, interposing himself between the parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. He met the burning wrath, and turned it aside from all believers. He stood, and stands now, between the dead and the living, between those who, by opposing his method of salvation, will die in their sins, and those who, living and believing in him, shall never die eternally. He is at the right hand of God, ever making intercession for us. And so, the plague is stayed. A stop is put to the progress of everlasting destruction. The fiery sword of offended justice cannot reach, nor shall the second death have any power over such as accept the atonement which he hath made for them, and thankfully receive the benefits of his all-prevailing intercession. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

And can any thing then, my brethren, prevent our accepting this atonement, and thankfully receiving the benefits of this intercession? Can any thing induce us, when the bountiful hand of mercy hath filled, and holdeth out the cup of salvation, to dash it untasted from us? Nothing can, but an utter ignorance of our sin, and of our danger.

Could

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 113

Could a dying Israelite have been prevailed upon, think you, to reject the atonement and intercession of Aaron? No surely. Only see how hope revives in their countenances, and joy sparkles in their eyes, all turned and fixed upon him in the execution of his priestly office. And why? Because they were sensible of their wretched and perilous estate. They needed not to be told, that they were expiring by the pestilence. They knew it, they felt; they were looking wishfully around them for help and deliverance, ready, with eagerness and impatience, with gratitude and thankfulness, to snatch at it, and embrace it, the moment it should appear. O why are not we so? Why do we hear of the atonement and intercession of the holy Jesus, with so much cold indifference? Why, but because we see not, we know not, we feel not the want of them. And yet, what is there, within us, or without us, that doth not teach and shew it us? To tell you that the world is full of sorrow, is no news; to tell you that the world is full of sin, is, I presume, no news. And from what would you desire to be delivered, if not from sin and sorrow? To tell you that a sentence of death is passed upon the bodies of men, and that, without redemption, a sentence of condemnation will be passed upon their souls and bodies too, this likewise is no news to any of you. Daily experience proves the first, and the Scripture asserts the second. And from what would you wish to be saved, if not from death and condemnation? Or what, in point of wretchedness and horror, was the camp of Israel with the pestilence in the midst of it, if compared to such a world as this? Go, thou who art tempted to reject, or to neglect the

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## 112 THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

satisfaction of Christ, go to the bed of sickness, and undraw the curtains of affliction; ask him who lies racked with pain, and trembling at the thoughts of the wrath to come, what his opinion is concerning the doctrine of atonement; and observe how the name of a Saviour and Intercessor puts comfort and gladness into his sorrowful and affrighted soul, at a time when the treasures and the crowns of eastern kings would be utterly contemned, as equally vain, worthless, and unprofitable, with the dust of the earth. Then reflect, that such, one day, must be thy state; and, in that state, such infallibly will be thy thoughts and sensations. And did the cares and pleasures of the world suffer living men to think and feel as dying men do, the intercession of Christ would be regarded and accepted by Christians, as that of Aaron once was by Israel. Now, indeed, the sentiments of men on this great point may be different, because their passions and their prejudices are different; but we shall all think alike upon the subject, when passion shall cease, and prejudice be no more, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. In that last and concerning day, the scene on which we have been meditating shall be again exhibited, in its most awful and tremendous accomplishment. Instead of the earthly pit opening its mouth to swallow up Korah and his company, the infernal pit of everlasting destruction shall disclose its bottomless depth, to receive alive into it the great adversary and all that have taken part with him against God and Christ. Instead of fire from the presence of the Lord, to consume the two hundred and fifty that offered incense, "Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and  
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## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR. 113

all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, and leave them neither root nor branch." Instead of the pestilence to destroy fourteen thousand only of his murmuring people, the inexhaustible floods of almighty vengeance, heaped up for ages, shall be poured out, to drown rebellious spirits in irresistible perdition. Then, when the heavens shall melt with fervent heat all around, the fiery gulph rolling beneath, and the earth, upon which we stand, sinking down into the flames, then what a sight will it be, to behold our blessed Aaron, our great mediator, standing up and interposing his merits between the dead and the living; between those who, disbelieving, have murmured against him, and those who, believing, have served and obeyed him. Then tremble, thou wretch, who hast blasphemed, or slighted the intercession of Jesus. But rejoice greatly, O faithful soul, whose trust hath ever been in Him; thy salvation is sure, and the day of thy redemption is come: rejoice, and shout aloud for joy; join the chorus of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, whom the well-beloved John heard saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And with them let "every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," exalt their voices, and proclaim, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth

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upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Amen. \*

\* The plan and substance of the foregoing Discourse are taken from one published some years ago, by my late learned and valuable friend, the Reverend Mr WATSON. But it always seemed to me, as I frequently used to tell him, that he had much abated the force and energy which the composition would otherwise have possessed, by introducing a secondary and subordinate subject, which continually diverted the attention of his reader from the primary and principal one. I was therefore tempted to work up his admirable materials afresh, with some few alterations and additions, that so noble a subject as the Intercession of Christ, illustrated by that of Aaron, might stand out to observation, *simplex duntaxat et unum.*

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## DISCOURSE VIII.

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### DANIEL IN BABYLON.

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DAN. vi. 10.

*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

THE chapter relates to us a conspiracy formed by the Babylonian princes against Daniel, because the king, "finding an excellent spirit in him," had preferred him above them all. For we read of no crime but his merit, which indeed is a crime sufficiently heinous in the eyes of those who are destitute of it. At all events therefore Daniel must be impeached. The only question was, in what form it should be done. "Concerning the kingdom," and his fidelity to his sovereign, "they could find (and we may be sure it was not for want of diligence in searching) none occasion or fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." And now, what do they fix upon, as an article of impeachment against him? Why truly, his PIETY. "We shall not find (say these statesmen) any occasion against this Daniel, unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." But some difficulty there still remained in the execution of this project; as, it seems, there

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was no law yet in being, even in Babylon itself, that inflicted a penalty upon a man for being eminently devout. The great men therefore assembling together, went in a body to the king, and prevailed upon him to sign a decree, which flattered his pride, that "whosoever should ask a petition of any God, or man, for thirty days, save of him, should be cast into the den of lions." Thus was atheism established by law in the court, city, and empire of Babylon, for the space of one month: and now, let any one *pray*, who dared. But the contrivers of this new law were well enough acquainted with Daniel's character, to know, that fear of the lions would never cause him to give over his devotions for one day, much less for thirty. And so accordingly it turned out. For "when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Never, surely, did the spirit and power of devotion shine forth with greater lustre, than at this time, in the person of Daniel, upon his knees, in such circumstances. Let us therefore meditate for a while on an object, which, as we are assured by the sequel, engaged the attention of heaven itself.

If we consider the situation of Daniel in Babylon, it will teach us that we ought on no account to omit our daily devotions. And if we consider the manner of his praying, it will teach us how we ought to perform them.

With regard to Daniel's situation in Babylon, we may contemplate him as one in captivity in a strange and heathen land; as one incumbered with the con-

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## DANIEL IN BABYLON.

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cerns of a vast empire; and as one in danger of his life for what he did.

It had been no wonder to have seen Daniel devout in Jerusalem. For there was the temple of God, the true church and worship, frequented by all his countrymen. There dwelt the holy one of Israel, and the light of his countenance visited, and shone continually upon them. But when Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles, and the temple laid low in the dust; when the Lord had "covered the daughter of Sion with a cloud in the day of his anger;" when "the glory was departed from Israel," and Daniel, with the rest of those that escaped the slaughter, had been led away into captivity, among infidels and scoffers; that the holy fire of devotion should burn and shine through all these disadvantages and temptations, this was indeed a fight, which God himself delighted to behold; as such devotion could spring from nothing else, but that love of him in the heart, mentioned by king Solomon, which "many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it;" all the sorrows and afflictions in the world cannot extinguish it; but it will break through, and triumph gloriously, as we find it did, in the case before us. In Babylon, as well as in Jerusalem, "Daniel prayed three times a day." And there are two circumstances mentioned, which seem to have contributed towards keeping his faith and devotion alive and vigorous in those worst of times, namely, meditation in the Scriptures, and a severe temperance. For in this ix. chapter he tells us, that "he understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." And in the first chapter

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we have an account of his refusing the luxuries of the regal table, and choosing to live upon diet of the plainest kind. Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, therefore, he had hope, and lived in expectation of seeing the divine promises accomplished, in the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the rebuilding of the temple, for which he continually prayed: while, by a strict and holy abstinence, he kept his heart from being ensnared by the good things of Babylon, and suffered not his body to gain the ascendant over his soul. O great and glorious example to every Israelite in Babylon, that is, to every *Christian* in the *world*! Let him likewise understand, by the divine books, the writings of the prophets and apostles, that the time approaches, when the church universal shall be delivered from her captivity, and the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and therefore, as a stranger and pilgrim here upon earth, let him abstain from fleshly lusts, and not be brought under the power of sense; praying always, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God. This if he shall neglect to do, let him know assuredly, that Daniel will rise up in the judgment against him, and condemn him. And much more so, if living in a Christian country, where the true church and worship are established, he shall omit to do that which Daniel never omitted to do, among his heathen enemies.

But perhaps we have too much business upon our hands, to spare time for our devotions. Time is very precious with most people, when they are to perform their devotions; and if they have not enough for every body, they generally make free, in the first place, with their Creator. But let these men of business consider the case of Daniel. Have they

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they more business than he had, who was the first of the three presidents appointed to receive and audit all the accounts of an hundred and twenty princes, set over the vast empire of Persia, of which, at that time, almost all the kingdoms of the earth were provinces? It would puzzle one to conceive a man in a situation that would afford him less leisure. Yet all this business did Daniel discharge faithfully and punctually, and found time to pray, and give thanks before his God, thrice every day constantly. The same we may observe of king David, who, though frequently engaged in war, as well as the management of a kingdom, yet made and kept the very same resolution as to his devotions. "At evening and at morning, and at noon day (says he) will I pray, and that instantly, and he shall hear my voice." Nay, this did not content him in the matter of thanksgiving; for, "seven times a day (says he elsewhere) do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments." And it was he who, amidst all the cares of state, composed and sung to the harp those divine hymns, which have been the delight of the faithful from that day to this, and shall be so to the end of the world. To these examples from the sacred history we may add that of a prince of our own, the great and good king Alfred, whose wisdom and diligence restored this kingdom from a state of the greatest confusion to one of the most perfect order, and preserved it in the same all the while he sat upon the throne. Yet no less than eight hours, out of the four and twenty, did this monarch, so engaged, allot to reading, meditation and prayer. Now all these are matters of fact, and shew us what may be done by persons, who will set to work in good earnest, and make a prudent disposition of their time. For in  
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one of these two respects it is most certain that man must be deficient, who pretends that he cannot find time to serve God; since Daniel, when prime minister in the court of Persia, "prayed and gave thanks before his God, three times a-day."

And this he continued to do, even when the law was passed, which made it certain death. "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." He did his duty exactly according to his usual custom, as if nothing had happened, and no law had been passed, or any thing said at court about it. He would not go to any other place, where his enemies might not have found him, but went to his own house, whither he might suppose they would follow him. He would not secrete himself in any private or remote corner of the house, but repaired forthwith to his own chamber, the place whereunto he always resorted. He thought it not enough to pray inwardly with his mind, which he might have done in any posture, without being perceived, but made his body bear its accustomed part in the service; "he kneeled upon his knees." He contented not himself with praying once, or twice only, dropping the third time in the middle of the day, on account of the imminent danger he was in, but made up his full and usual complement; "He kneeled upon his knees three times a-day." Nor did he *pray* only, and not *give thanks*, cutting off some part of the service, to make the time of danger shorter, but performed the whole, without curtailing or diminishing ought; "He prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

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And, in short, he would not so much as shut his windows, but did all this, "His windows in his chamber being open towards Jerusalem." In order to shew the meaning of this last circumstance, we must have recourse to a noble passage in king Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, which Daniel had in his eye, and by which he directed his conduct. 1 Kings viii. 46, &c. "If thy people sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives to the land of the enemy, far or near: yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them away captives, saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayer and supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them that carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them." The circumstance therefore of "praying towards Jerusalem" being thus enjoined, Daniel would by no means omit it. And now, let us consider with ourselves, how clear the conscience, how holy the soul, how stedfast the faith, how lively the hope, how fervent the charity, how invincible the courage of Daniel must have

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been, who, in such circumstances, could calmly and composedly go on in the regular and exact performance of his stated devotions. Let us consider of how great consequence the due performance of them is, if with death in its most horrible form before his eyes, he thought he could not justify a single omission of them. And whenever we are tempted to neglect our prayers, let us remember that Daniel, though the den of lions was to be the consequence, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

We have now taken a view of the situation of Daniel in Babylon. We have considered him as one in captivity in a strange and heathen land; as one encumbered with the concerns of a vast empire; and as one in danger of his life for what he did; and hence we have been convinced, it is to be hoped, that nothing ought to make us omit our daily devotions.

From the same great example we may learn how we ought to perform them, with regard to place, posture, time, and matter.

As to place, Daniel, we find, "went to his house, and shut himself up in his chamber." And our blessed Lord has enjoined us all to do the same. "Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and shut the door." And the reason is plain. He who would pray, must first retire. The spirit of the world and the spirit of prayer are contrary the one to the other, and experience will teach any one, that he cannot well pray in a croud. Business, or pleasure, or even common conversation, if it be about the things of this world, and continued for any long time, will strangely indispose the mind for devotion; and the soul, before she can

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take her flight to heaven, must plume and balance her wings by holy meditation. She must rally her scattered and dissipated thoughts, and fix them on the business she is going about. She must consider the nature of God, to whom she is to pray; of herself who is to pray to him; and of those things for which she is to pray to him. She must know the sins she has been guilty of, to confess them; and the graces she stands in need of, to petition for them. All this is not to be done but by deep meditation; and meditation, which is the mother of devotion, is the daughter of retirement. They who do not meditate, cannot pray; and they who do not retire, can do neither. God help, and have mercy upon all those, who are in this most wretched and deplorable state; as all must be, who pass their days in a senseless round of vain amusements and diversions, in a continual hurry and dissipation of thought, ignorant of the benefits and comforts of the closet, and therefore ignorant of the true state of their minds, ignorant of their Saviour, ignorant of their duty, ignorant of every thing which they were sent into the world to learn. Thus they live, and—thus they die! If therefore we conceive a dread of such a death, (and too great a dread we cannot conceive) let us learn of holy Daniel to commune with our own heart, and with God, in our chamber. And then let us judge ourselves to have made some progress in the divine life, when the pleasures we find there are preferred (as every experienced Christian knows they ought to be preferred) to all the pleasures the world can offer.

Next to the place, we are to consider the posture in which Daniel prayed. He “kneeled upon his knees, with his face towards Jerusalem.” The Christian warrior differs from all others in this particular, that he is never so sure of conquest, as

when he enters into the battle in this attitude. The adversary had rather find him in any situation than this, which is indeed his best posture of defence against all temptations whatsoever. Daniel was so entirely secure in it, that he valued not the roaring of all the lions in the den of Babylon, just opening their mouths to devour him. Nor need the devout soul regard a whit more the rage and fury of that "roaring lion," spoken of by the apostle, "who goeth about continually up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may devour." I say, the devout soul need not regard it; for we must not forget, that the posture of the body can profit nothing, unless it be accompanied with that disposition of mind, which it is designed to represent. We are found hypocrites, if we are not inwardly what we appear outwardly to be, when we fall upon our knees. For the intention of so doing is to testify an awful sense of the power and glory of God, and as deep an one of our own infirmity and unworthiness, under which we sink down to the earth from whence we were taken, and acknowledge ourselves to be but sinful dust and ashes. By this act, when rightly performed, the mind going along with it, we obey the divine command, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God;" where the apostle addresses us as criminals, under the hand of justice, uplifted to strike the fatal stroke, which there is no way of avoiding, but by falling to the earth. In a word, the duty of prayer is founded upon the sufficiency of God, as an almighty Creator and Redeemer, and our wants, as sinful creatures; both which great truths we confess at once, by meekly kneeling upon our knees; and therefore this is the proper posture for prayer. But what shall we say of Daniel "setting his face

face towards Jerusalem," when he prayed? Are we to imitate him in that likewise? Undoubtedly. Not according to the letter, but the spirit. The old Jerusalem and temple are destroyed, to be rebuilt no more; in the room of which a new Jerusalem and a new temple have long since arisen. The new Jerusalem is the Christian church, and the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple. For Christ we must turn our eyes; in the union and communion of his church we must offer up our prayers. Daniel praying in Babylon looked towards Jerusalem; the Christian praying in the world should look towards heaven, towards that new, spiritual, and celestial city of the living God, whose foundations are upon the holy and everlasting hills, and which cannot be removed, but standeth fast for ever. Thither let him look, thither let him pray, in this land of his captivity.

But when, and how often is he to pray? With regard to this point also, Daniel will instruct him, who "kneeled upon his knees three times a day;" that is to say, in the words of holy David before cited, "At morning, and at evening, and at noon day." What man is he, that can help offering up his morning sacrifice of devotion, when awaking from sweet sleep, refreshed and renewed, he beholds all things as it were new created? The sun arises, and finds the cattle upon a thousand hills waiting for his appearance, and all the birds of the air ready to pay their tribute of thanksgiving, for the return of his glorious and enlivening beams. And shall man—man, for whose use and benefit all these things were made—shall man alone lie buried in sleep; or, when arisen, forget to worship his God? Shall he not rather rouse all his affections at once, with these and the like strains of the sweet

finger of Israel;—"Awake up my glory, awake lute and harp," every organ of my body, and faculty of my soul; "I myself will awake right early. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee. I will sing of thy power, O Lord, and praise thy mercy betimes in the morning. I will magnify thee, O God my king, and praise thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever." Now is the time for us to take a view beforehand of every thing that is to be done in the day, to offer it to God with purity of intention, and pray for his grace to direct us in all things; but more especially in those instances, in which we are most likely to need it; as the constitution, temper, situation, and circumstances of every person in the world make some particular temptations more dangerous to *him* than others. Again: who, that was in his senses, when the evening closes upon him, and consigns him to the darkness of the night, would venture to go to sleep (when for aught he knows he may awake in another world) without having first examined himself concerning the thoughts, words, and actions of the day, and so confessed and repented him of the sins therein committed, as to have rendered himself a proper object of the divine mercy through Christ, into whose hands he should now commend his spirit, as he would do with his dying breath. Blessed is he, who thus begins and ends the day with God, and so passes a life of piety and peace. His sleep shall be sweet indeed. And sweetest of all shall be that last sleep, out of which he shall awake to glory, in the morning of the resurrection. With regard to Daniel's third hour of prayer, namely, noon, if they who have it not in their power to retire for that purpose, would ac-

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custom themselves daily to think, at that hour, on Christ, who was then nailed to the cross for their sins, and lift up their souls to God in a short prayer for salvation by him, they would find themselves much strengthened and refreshed thereby. As to those whom God has blessed with more leisure, let them by all means follow Daniel's example, till they can find a better. Let them "kneel upon their knees THREE times a day;" and let those who retire at that season to adorn their persons, take the opportunity of putting on the ornaments of grace, and renewing the spirit of their minds.

Lastly, this same great and fruitful example of holy Daniel affords us a direction likewise as to the matter of our devotions. He "prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." Prayer and thanksgiving therefore were the two parts of his daily service. What the nature of his prayer was, we may know from that recorded in the ix. chapter, where he sets himself to confess his sins, and those of his countrymen, and to intreat for mercy on Jerusalem, with a fervour and affection never to be exceeded. Our devotions then, according to this model, must consist of confession of sins; deprecation of the punishments acknowledged to be justly due to them; supplication for pardon, deliverance, and grace; and intercession for the church, and all included in her, our relations, friends, countrymen, and fellow Christians, and more especially for all the sons and daughters of affliction; the whole to be concluded with thanksgiving; \* concerning which we may observe, that

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\* Let me be permitted to recommend to the reader, for his companion and directory in this way, *The Devotions of Bishop ANDREWS, translated from the Greek by Dean SCANHORN*; a new and beautiful edition of which has been lately printed for Mr RIVINGTON, in St Paul's Church-Yard.

no situation in this world can exclude the necessity, and take away the ground of it; since we find Daniel "giving thanks," when the city and temple of God were in ashes, and himself a captive in Babylon. Even then he not only "prayed," but also "gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." And indeed, nothing but a brutish stupidity can hinder any man from seeing reason to thank God, so long as he grants him life, and space, by repentance and faith, to secure to himself a part and portion in the glories of eternity. The poorest beggar, in rags upon a dunghill, ought to bless and praise the Lord without ceasing, that he has yet this privilege allowed him; a privilege denied to so many thousand miserable spirits; whose day of grace has long since expired in the night of everlasting death. Whatever therefore be our lot in this world, let us remember the apostolical injunction, "In all things give thanks:" and in order to stir ourselves up to the obeying it, let us only recount the mercies we have received through our Lord Jesus Christ, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spiritual and temporal, from the day of our birth to this present moment; and the result will be, it must be, that we shall all, the poorest and most afflicted among us, make the psalmist's resolution our own; "I will always give thanks unto the Lord, his praise shall ever be in my mouth:" and whenever, like holy Daniel, we "kneel upon our knees to pray," we shall, at the same time, like him, "give thanks before our God."

Thus therefore does Daniel not only strip us of every excuse for neglecting our devotions, but give us likewise full instructions how to perform them, with regard to place, posture, time, and matter. And let the blessed effect and reward of his devotion

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tion fire our souls to an imitation of so great and glorious an example. Would we be delivered from the power of the devil, and the bitter pains of eternal death? Would we be holy, and just, and good? Would we be filled with wisdom and understanding in the counsels of the Almighty? Would we be high in the favour of heaven? Nay, would we be saved from temporal calamities, and brought to honour, esteem, and reverence, in the sight of men? Constancy in prayer can open a way to all these blessings. For if we ask, why Daniel was preserved from the lions? Why he was endued with such innocence of life? Why he was admitted into the secrets of the divine œconomy? Why he was styled, by way of eminence, "the man greatly beloved?" And why the name of God was glorified by his promotion in a heathen court? The answer to all is—"He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God."

## DISCOURSE IX.

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### THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

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EPHES. v. 16.

*Redeeming the Time.*

**M**AN is often in Scripture compared to a merchant; and there are three things more especially, which, considered in that capacity, he is enjoined to purchase at any rate. The first is the Kingdom of Heaven, likened by our Saviour, in one of his parables, to "a pearl of great price, which a merchant having met with, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The second is Truth. "Buy the truth, (saith Solomon) and sell it not." The third purchase we are to make is that mentioned in the text: "Redeeming the Time." And this indeed opens the way to the other two; since it is by a right employment of our Time, that we come to a knowledge and love of the Truth, which leads us to the Kingdom of heaven, through him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

The phrase, "redeeming the time," supposes us to have been formerly negligent in this sort of spiritual traffic, and so to have suffered loss; which therefore we are to make up, by taking every opportunity of trading to advantage for the future.

The inestimable value and right improvement of time are therefore the subjects suggested to our meditations by these words of the apostle; in the prosecution.

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secution of which, let us consider, Why Time should be redeemed, and How it may be redeemed.

Time, little as men account of it, is the most choice and precious thing in the world. "The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." And this God seems to have pointed out to us, by the very manner of his giving it, so different from that in which he vouchsafes his other gifts. For whereas he is graciously pleased to bestow many of them upon us in large quantities, so that we can keep some store of them by us, with Time it is not so. Of that there is but a moment in the world at once, which is taken away when another is given. If therefore the value of a thing rises in proportion to its scarceness, what shall a man give, or rather what shall he not give, for the redemption of Time which is thus dealt out by heaven, like some rich and invaluable cordial in single drops, to the end, doubtless, that not one of them should be suffered to fall to the ground? We take no account of Time, but by the loss of it; the clock which strikes, informs us—not that we have so much in our possession, but that so much is gone from us: for which reason it hath been filed "the knell of a departed hour," which rings out for the death of another portion of our time, admonishing us to make a better use of that which remains. The present moment only is our own. As to the future, God alone knows whether they will ever be present to us: and for the past, they are never more to return; which is a

Second reason why Time ought to be redeemed by all means in our power, because, when once past, it never returns. The merchant, who knows that there is a precious commodity to be purchased  
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at a reasonable rate, by which his fortune may be made at once; and knows withal, that if he miss this, he shall never have such another opportunity, what pains will he not take? How early will he rise; how late take rest? How diligent will he be in fitting out his vessel? With what haste will he put to sea? With what earnestness and anxiety will he watch the wind, and spread all his sails, to catch every breath that may waft him in time to the port for which he is bound? This is our very case, to a tittle. Time is that precious commodity, by a right use of which our fortunes are made forever, for ever and ever, to all eternity. And Time, when once gone, never returns. For where is yesterday? It is "with the years beyond the flood;" and we can as soon bring back one, as the other. Were all the princes of the earth to unite the wisdom of their counsels, and the might of their kingdoms, they could not recall one single moment. How plain and obvious is this to the common sense of every man? But who is there, that pays so much regard to this well known truth, as to regulate his conduct by it, and to make his actions conformable to his knowledge? Where is the Christian, who, in order to secure a portion in the glories of eternity by a right employment of his time, useth half the diligence which is continually used by the merchants of the earth, to purchase an uncertain tenure of its perishable goods? But so it is, that let us look where we will, whenever the things of this world are in view, we find men acting, in their several professions and callings, according to the best and most approved maxims of each; projecting their schemes wisely, and executing them vigorously; in a word, taking their measures as if they were in earnest; whereas, behold the same men

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considered as Christians, engaged in the concerns of a better world; and a view of their conduct is really sufficient to make a thinking unbeliever conclude, that nine parts in ten of them either believe no more than himself, or else that a statute of lunacy ought forthwith to be taken out against them. If therefore we acknowledge, that time once past never returns, let us acknowledge likewise that this is a good reason why we should redeem what is past by making a right use of what is present. And let us act accordingly.

A third reason why time ought to be redeemed, is the consideration that it must be accounted for. A steward entrusted with the management of his lord's goods, and a person employed to trade for another, should of all men be the most diligent and careful: seeing that at a certain stated time they are to deliver in an account of what they received, and the profits they have made; upon the fidelity and exactness of which, their future welfare is to depend. By these two cases our Lord has thought proper to represent to us our state and condition in this life, in the parable of the Unjust Steward, and that of the Ten Talents. The goods and talents committed to our trust, to manage and improve to the best advantage, are all the gifts of God, whether those of nature, fortune, or grace, that is, in short, every thing we are, and every thing we have. Of the use and improvement we shall have made of all these an account is to be delivered in at a day appointed; and our eternal welfare depends upon its being such an one as will abide the strict scrutiny of him who committed them to us. The steward, who appeared to have wasted his lord's goods, was dismissed from his service; and from the unprofitable servant, who, instead of

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trading with his talent, buried it in the earth, that talent was taken, and he was "cast into outer darkness, where was weeping and gnashing of teeth." Now time being, as I have shewn, one of the choicest and most precious gifts of God to men, will, at the last great day, be accounted for with a strictness proportionable to its value. Let us therefore take care that the Accuser of the brethren, the ever watchful and malicious adversary of our salvation, have it not in his power to lodge an accusation against us with our Lord, of our having wasted that good thing committed to us; of having hidden that most precious talent in the earth, instead of trading with it to the best advantage; of having killed and buried our time in sensuality, sloth, and idleness. For this murder, like others, will not always be concealed; the hours destroyed in secret will appear, when we least expect it, to the unspeakable terror and amazement of our souls; they arise from the dead, and fly away to heaven (whither they might have carried better news) and there tell sad tales of us, which we shall be sure to hear of again, when we hold up our hands at the bar, and they shall come as so many swift witnesses against us. The consideration therefore that we are to account for our time will be allowed as a third reason why it should be redeemed.

A fourth, and that no less strong and powerful than the former, is the shortness and uncertainty of human life. No man knows precisely when his accounts will be called for; but this he does know most infallibly, that it cannot be very long, and that it may be very soon. "Why, alas, does mortal man think to live long, when he cannot promise to himself the next minute! How many have lamentably deceived their own hearts in this point,  
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and been suddenly snatched away? How often do we hear, how often do we read, such a man is slain, another is drowned, a third has broke his neck with a fall, this man died eating, and that playing; one perished by fire, another by the sword, another of a disease, another was slain by thieves. Thus death is quickly the end of all, and man's life passeth away like a shadow that departeth;\* like a tale that is told; like a flower that fadeth; like a post that hasteth by; like a bubble that rises, and shines, and sinks again into the common mass; like a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth. This again is a truth universally acknowledged, insomuch that it is difficult to be for an hour in company, where the rapid progress of time is not made the subject of an observation. And yet we are under such a delusion in our reckonings of this matter, that although the time past be certain, yet we regard the former as nothing, and trust to the latter as if we could command at least half the days of Methuselah, and had entered an effectual caveat against any claim which death might have upon us, until the expiration of four hundred years. Whereas "though men be strong," that sometimes, and that but very seldom indeed, comparatively speaking, "they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone." And what use does the Psalmist make of this consideration? It follows in the next verse but one; "Lord, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;" that is, teach us so to meditate on the shortness of our time, that we may improve it aright to the purposes of salvation. The same reflection, and the same

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\* KEMPIS.

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inference drawn from it, occur in the xxxix. Psalm. "When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity." This thought melts the heart of the royal suppliant into a religious tenderness, and dissolved in penitential tears, he pours forth the following most affecting strains; strains, that should be continually in the mouth of the Christian pilgrim. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling, hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more seen." It may be further observed, upon this head, that we may learn an useful lesson from an enemy. It is said of the devil, that "he is come down upon the earth having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Now, if the shortness of the time allowed be an argument with him for labouring hard to destroy our souls, surely it ought to be one with us for labouring as hard to save them: especially if we consider what that work is, and the difficulty of accomplishing it, which shall therefore be the

Fifth argument adduced for the redemption of time. Time ought to be redeemed, because of the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it. Did we see the husbandman dreaming away his time, when all his fields lay uncultivated; or the generals of an army killing an hour at cards, when the enemy was preparing to storm the camp; or a pilot asleep, when the ship was running directly upon a rock; and did all these alledge, as the reason of their behaviour, that they had *nothing to do*,

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we should think a madhouse the only proper place for them: and we should think right. But why do we not perceive, that there is not less of absurdity and madness in the conduct of that Christian, who wastes his precious hours in idleness, and apologizes for it by saying, in the same manner, that he has *nothing to do*: when perhaps the work of his salvation, that greatest of all works, the very work for which God sent him into the world, is not yet so much as entered upon, or even thought of. The heart lies fallow; it is overrun with corrupt lusts and evil affections; the ground not yet broken up, much less the seed sown; and the time of harvest approaching: the Christian husbandman, it seems, is dreaming, for he has *nothing to do*. The world, the flesh, and the devil, have united their forces, and temptation is at the gates, ready to carry all before it: the Christian warrior is taking his pastime, for he has *nothing to do*. The poor weather-beaten soul is driving, at the mercy of winds and waves, upon the stormy and tempestuous sea of this troublesome world, amidst rocks and quicksands: the Christian steersman is asleep, for he has *nothing to do*. Our Lord bids us watch and pray; he orders us to strive to enter in at the straight gate, by the narrow way; he enjoins us to labour for the meat that endureth; his apostle presses it upon us to work out our salvation; yet we can persuade ourselves, that we have *nothing to do*. How is it then? Are temptations fewer than they were, so that there is no danger of falling into them, though we do not watch and pray against them? Is the gate grown wider, or the way made broader, so that we may enter in without striving? Will the meat that endureth, any more than that which perisheth, drop into our mouths without la-

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bouring for it? Can we obtain salvation *now*, without working it out? Such news, perhaps, is sometimes brought us, and it cannot but be agreeable to flesh and blood. There is *only* one misfortune, which is, that it cannot possibly be true, the Gospel of Jesus Christ being intended for the use of all ages and generations, and therefore remaining, like it's divine author, "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." Nay, it seems to be a truth as clear as Scripture and experience can make any truth, that the world grows worse as it grows older; consequently, the difficulty of working out our salvation is increased in proportion, and fresh force is daily added to the apostolical argument; "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And thus much for the fifth reason why time ought to be redeemed, namely, the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it.

The last reason shall be this, because we have already lost so large a proportion of the time allowed us for the purpose. For if we consider, how many of our first years passed in a state of childhood; how many more were played away in the heat and folly of youth; how long it was before we sat down to reflect upon our true condition in this world, upon the works which Christ had done for us, and those which he had enjoined us to do, through his grace, for ourselves; how high we might by this time have stood in the scale of virtue, had we well employed the numberless hours which we certainly *might* have well employed, and withall how low we now stand, by having neglected so to employ them; I say, if we seriously consider these things (for very serious considerations they are) we shall think it but reasonable that we endeavour by double diligence to repair former neglects

glects—*reasonable*, did I say? We shall embrace every opportunity with joy, and on our bended knees adore that mercy, so much beyond all we could hope for, which has made it possible for us by any means to redeem the time we have lost. For although this loss, through a strange thoughtlessness and blindness of mind, generally troubles and afflicts us less than any other, yet think what tribulation and anguish will seize upon us, if by these means our work should be found unfinished at the day of death! How precious will the hours then seem, that have formerly been thrown away on trifles! How many worlds shall we then be ready to offer for one of them? And who can say, that it will be granted? Think on those wretched spirits, who misspent their time, while in the body, and are therefore now entered upon their portion of everlasting sorrow. What would *they* give for the opportunity vouchsafed us of being reconciled to God, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance? Could any of them be released from their prison house, and sent back into the world for one year, in how holy and heavenly a manner would they spend it? How deeply would they mourn for their sins! How fervently would they pray for pardon! How earnestly would they exhort others to do likewise! What therefore they would do, to be delivered from the bitter pains of eternal death, let us do, to avoid falling into them. I shall close this head, with that amazing description, given us by St John in his Revelation, of a transaction which is one day to happen. “I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was, as it were, the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he set his right foot in the sea, and his left foot

foot

foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices." But this wonderful and glorious person has a message to deliver to the inhabitants of the world, far more terrible than his cry, or the seven thunders that followed it. "And he lift up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are; and the sea and the things that are therein, that **THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO LONGER.**" The proper inference surely is this; "While we **HAVE TIME**, let us do good unto all men."

These then are the reasons why time should be redeemed; because it is the most choice and precious thing in the world; because when once gone, it never returns; because it is to be accounted for; because it is so short and uncertain; because of the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it; and because we have already lost so large a proportion of the time allowed us to do it in.

In order to shew how time *may* be redeemed, permit me to lay down a few short rules for the management and improvement of it.

First, *Observe a method in the distribution of your time.* Every hour will then know its proper employment, and no time will be lost. Idleness will be shut out at every avenue, and with her that numerous body of vices, that make up her train.\* This method must vary, according to the different callings and circumstances of mankind. They  
whom

\* It may be added, as a supplement to this rule—*Have always some work in hand, which may be going on, during the many intervals (for many there will always be) both of business and pleasure.* On this part of the subject read the **RAMBLER**, Vol. iii. No. 108. and consider well the instance of **ERASMUS**, there adduced. Read likewise **SPECTATOR**, Vol. ii. No. 93, 94. and Vol. iv. No. 316.

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whom God hath blessed with plentiful fortunes, which set them above the necessity of engaging in any profession, are happy in this respect, that they have more command of their time, and consequently may give a larger proportion of it to the improvement of their minds by reading, meditation, and prayer, as well as to the employment of discovering and relieving the wants of their poor neighbours. They, on the other hand, who must go forth to their work and to their labour, whether of mind or body, are happy in this respect, that a great part of their time is laid out for them, and they are prevented from wasting it in idleness, by the order of Providence. Be it their care, to consecrate their labour to God, by regarding it as a penance imposed on them for sin, and performing it in a spirit of contentment and resignation, chearfulness and joy, even as Christ performed his, looking for and hastening to that time, when they shall enter into the promised rest. In the morning let the mind be seasoned with devotion and heavenly wisdom, to fit it for its employment; and in the evening, to prepare it for its repose. Let the sabbaths and festivals of the church be in no sense days of idleness, much less of vice and folly; but given to the works of religion and charity; that they may be to us, what they were designed to be to all, minute representations of the sabbath that remaineth for the people of God; little preludes to that everlasting jubilee, that shall be one day celebrated in the heavenly Canaan. Wo be to that man, who wastes these hallowed portions of his time upon the concerns of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, doing nothing, or worse than nothing: stranger to the resurrection of Jesus, the glories of the saints, and the joys of heaven, he rejects the pledges of  
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his eternal inheritance, and throws those jewels into the mire, that should have adorned his crown of righteousness.

Secondly, *Be moderate in your recreations.* Recreations, we all know, are necessary. It is the Christian's concern to take care that they are innocent; which they will be, if they give rise to no evil passion, such as anger, or avarice, too generally attendants upon games of all sorts; and if no more time be spent in them than is necessary to unbend the mind, and fit it for a return to its employment. But when recreation becomes (as of late in this nation) a trade and a profession, and is made a means of putting the soul upon the rack of contending passions, it no longer deserves the name, but is in reality a drudgery imposed by the adversary of human happiness upon those, who will not give their time to the service of their Maker. In one word, it is *Egypt* and the *task-masters* over again. From which we have reason to pray that our good Lord would vouchsafe to deliver us all!

Thirdly, *Cut off, as much as may be, unnecessary visits.* Of all thieves, they are the worst, who rob us of our time, because for the loss of that no amends can ever be made us.\* And there are in every place some, who, being idle themselves, do their best endeavours to make others so; in which work, partly through a disposition in those others to be made so, and partly through a false fear and shame, which hinders them from fraying away such birds of prey, they are often suffered to succeed. An assembly of such persons can be compared to nothing but a *slaughter-house*, where the precious hours, and oftentimes the characters of all their friends

\* On the Robbery of Time, see a most excellent paper in the IDLER. Vol. I. No. 14.

friends and acquaintance, are butchered without mercy. And perhaps there are few maxims that have more truth in them, than one laid down by a great master in the art of *Holy Living*. "No man can be provident of his *Time*, who is not prudent in the choice of his *Company*."

Lastly, *Examine, every evening, how you have spent the day.* For how can that man know the state of his affairs, who keeps no account? The task, at first, will be irksome, and the adversary will try every way to make you neglect, and by degrees drop the practice. And why; Because he knows that no person, who continues it, will long remain under his power. It will let you into some secrets, that will greatly shock and alarm you. But you must know your follies, how else can you reform them? Whereas, when a constant and faithful performance of this exercise (the benefits and advantages of which are without number and without end) has brought you acquainted with your errors, every day will correct those of the preceding. You will find that God has given you time enough for every good purpose,\* but none to waste. You will soon know the true value of time, and become an adept in the management of it.—And of this be assured, for your comfort and encouragement, that the time rightly employed, be it when it may, is with God "an acceptable time;" and that every day well spent is to yourselves "a day of salvation."

\* This seems to be intimated to us in that question of our Lord — "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" John xi. 9.

## DISCOURSE X.

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### PATIENCE POURTRAYED.

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I TIM. vi. 11.

*Follow after Patience.*

AMONG all the graces that adorn a Christian soul, like so many jewels of various colours and lustres, against the day of her espousals to the Lamb of God, there is not one more brilliant than this of patience; not one which brings more glory to God, or contributes so much towards making and keeping peace on earth; not one which renders a man more happy within himself, more agreeable to all about him; insomuch that even they who themselves possess it not, yet are sure to commend it in others. They set their seal to the truth, though by so doing they condemn their own practice. Patience is a virtue common to us with God; it is the characteristic of Christ, and the leading precept of the Gospel; it is recommended by the examples of all the saints; rendered necessary by the present state of man; and set off by the manifold inconveniencies of its contrary, impatience, as well as its own incomparable excellencies and advantages. By enlarging upon these particulars, I shall endeavour to recommend this celestial grace to your esteem, and excite you to the attainment of so invaluable a treasure.

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I. In the first place, Patience is a virtue common to us with God. *Long-suffering* is his darling attribute; and what is dear in his sight, ought not to be less precious in our's. And how marvellous is *his* patience, who daily pours his blessings on those men, who as daily offend, affront, and dishonour him; making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sending rain on the unjust as well as the just, and not excluding the worst of us from those blessings, to the least of which the best of us have no title! For the benefit of the guilty as well as the innocent, of the impious as well as the pious, of the ungrateful as well as the grateful, the seasons take their rounds, the elements work together, the light and air exert their kindly influences, the fountains send forth their salutary streams, the corn fields grow yellow, the grapes ripen upon the vines, the boughs of the fruit trees bend down, the groves are clothed, and the pastures flourish. The Gospel is still preached to those who slight it; salvation is still held forth to those who have so often dashed it from them; Christ is still offered to those who have blasphemed him. And although God be provoked every day, yet he holds his hand, and waits patiently, till the last minute of man's trial and the world's duration be past. Although he have the power in his own hands, and the weapons of his indignation are all ready, he defers to strike, if perhaps men may at length be led by his long-suffering to repentance; because "he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted, and live;" and while judgment sleeps, mercy calls night and day to sinners, "Why will ye die; Repent, and ye shall be forgiven; turn ye, and ye shall live." Yet God's blessings are abused to the purposes of luxury and lasciviousness; his truth is denied; his com-

mandments are broken; his church is persecuted; his ministers are insulted; his Son is crucified afresh; and his long-suffering is made an argument against his existence—And he is still patient. What is man, then, that he should complain?

II. The patience which we so much admire in God, shone forth yet more amazingly in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. For was ever patience like that patience, which, descending from a throne of glory, bore a long imprisonment in the womb, to sanctify sinners; and lay in a stable, to bring them to a kingdom? Behold the master baptized by the servant, and he who alone could give remission of sins, submitting to be washed in the laver of regeneration. He fasts forty days, who filleth all things living with plenteousness, and who is himself the Bread of Life. He endures the temptations of Satan, and answers them one by one from the Scriptures, who could have remanded him to his chains in a moment, by the word of his power. With his disciples he lived, not as their Lord, but the servant of all. How tenderly did he bear with all their ignorances and infirmities, leading them on gently, as they were able to follow him! And that they might never refuse to do offices of kindness for each other, he washed all their feet, and amongst them those of Judas, from whom he meekly received the kiss that betrayed him. How patiently did he endure the contradiction of sinners, and, in his disputes with the Jews, how lovingly did he try to persuade the incredulous, and to melt by kindness the hearts that were hardened! How quietly did he submit to the insolence of the proud, and give place to the fury of the wrathful, desirous, even to his last hour, to save, if possible, those murderers of the prophets, those rebels against their God!

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But when the time of his passion came, what railings and revilings were patiently heard by him, what mockery and insult patiently suffered; How was he wounded, who heals every disease? How was he crowned with thorns, who crowns his martyrs with unfading garlands? How was "he stript naked, who clothes the field with flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven, and the dead with immortality?" How was he fed with gall and vinegar, who reaches out to his people the fruits of paradise, and the cup of salvation? Innocent and righteous, nay innocence and righteousness itself, he was numbered with the transgressors. The Truth was oppressed by false witnesses; he was judged who is to judge the world; the Word of God became dumb as a lamb before his shearers. And when, at the crucifixion, the heavens were confounded, and the earth trembled, and the sun, that he might not be forced to behold the villainy of the Jews, withdrew his shining, and left the world in darkness, still the blessed Jesus said nothing, and betrayed no emotion of anger, but endured without murmuring all that earth and hell could lay upon him, till he had put the last stroke to this most finished picture of perfect patience, and prayed for his murderers; whom he has been ever since and is now ready to receive, upon their repentance, not only to pardon, but to a participation of the glories of his kingdom.

III. The patience thus practised by Christ is enjoined by his holy Gospel, being indeed the badge of that Gospel, and its professors. For thus saith the blessed Jesus to all his disciples; "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt love thy neighbour; and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies,

and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Is the mind tempted to impatience by the disappointment of its desires, and the loss of worldly goods and enjoyments? The Scripture, to eradicate the temptation, is full of precepts enjoining us to contemn the world, and not to set our hearts upon things that pass away, and that cannot satisfy the soul, when it is possessed of them. If our desires after these perishable goods are immoderate, our impatience at the loss of them will be always in proportion. And then how shall he ever fulfil the royal law of charity, or willingly give away his money, who cannot part with it patiently, when God in the course of his providence is pleased to resume his own again? The worldly man is always impatient, because he prefers his body to his soul: the Christian prefers his soul to his body, and therefore knows how to give largely, and lose patiently. Nay, he can be meek and resigned under all the injuries which malice can offer to his person; and to him who smites him on the one cheek can present the other, rejoicing that he is counted worthy to suffer something for his Saviour, who suffered so much for him; and referring the decision of his cause to the righteous judgment of God at the last day. For what are we, that we should avenge ourselves, and not rather, by giving place unto wrath, at once disappoint the malice of the enemy, and secure to ourselves the patronage of heaven?

IV. We find all the saints of God, who have been eminent for their Faith in Christ, to have been as eminent for their Patience, without which their  
faith

faith must have failed in the day of trial; it being not through faith alone, but, as the Apostle says, "through faith and patience," that they "inherited the promises." Faith begat patience, which, like a dutiful child, proved the support of its parent. Abel, the first son of Adam celebrated for his faith, through patience continued faithful unto death, and so received the crown of life. Patience preserved Noah's faith all the time the ark was building, and while it floated upon the waters, which destroyed every thing else. Through patience Abraham endured the severest trial that faith was ever put to, and offered up his only son; who, through the same patience, neither lifted up his hand, nor opened his mouth against his father. Through patience Jacob, persecuted by his brother, quietly departed out of his own country, and afterwards pacified him with gifts and presents. Through patience Joseph endured and forgave the ill usage of his brethren, and fed them in the time of dearth. Through patience Moses, so often abused, and insulted, and only not stoned by a stiff-necked people, still intreated the Lord for them. Through patience David would not slay his implacable enemy Saul, when he had him in his power, and afterwards revenged his death by executing the person who slew him. Through patience Job endured the loss of all things, and the utmost malice of the tempter, and came forth as choice gold from the furnace of adversity, an example for all ages and generations to follow. Through patience St Paul lived a life of incessant toil and trouble, and rested not till he had accomplished the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, and preached the Gospel to the heathen world. Through patience, in a word, the glorious company of the a-

postles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs and confessors, fought the good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith, neither allured nor terrified from their duty, but triumphing, upon the rack, and in the flames, over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and going to "the kingdom," through "the patience of Jesus Christ."

V. The present state of man renders the practice of this virtue absolutely necessary for him, if he would enjoy any happiness here, or hereafter. Could we indeed live in the world without suffering, then were there no need of patience. But thus runs the universal sentence; "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground out of which thou wast taken." By this sentence are we all bound, as by a chain of adamant, and every man, "from him that sitteth upon the throne, to him that lieth in the dungeon," must have labour and sorrow for his portion, till he depart out of this mortal life. And to this sad truth we all bear testimony, as soon as we come into it. The cries of the new born infant testify that it is born to sorrow. Tribulation, thus necessarily entailed upon us, admits of no remedy but patience; the reasonableness of which is strongly enforced by the consideration, that *our* sufferings are the punishment of our sins. "We indeed receive the due reward of our deeds:" one man only suffered, who "had done nothing amiss." In Christians it is more especially requisite, who, besides the ordinary calamities of life, have the devil with all his wiles to resist, the flesh with all its desires to mortify,

tify, the world with all its temptations and terrors to overcome. The devil cannot be resisted, the flesh cannot be mortified, the world cannot be overcome without Patience; by which alone repentance is perfected, faith is supported, hope is preserved alive, charity is nourished, and all those holy tempers are formed in us, which Christ in his sermon on the mount hath pronounced *blest*; yea and they ever shall be blessed. We therefore surely have of all men the most need of patience, that after we have thereby done and suffered the will of God, we may receive the promises: for the promises are these—"He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." But how shall we endure to the end? how shall we be faithful unto death, if we have not patience? as the wise man pathetically exclaims; "Wo unto you that have lost Patience; and what will ye do, when the Lord shall visit you?"\* Patience is the only armour that is proof against all assaults, and he who has well buckled it on, needeth not to fear any temptation. Money cannot tempt him, who can endure poverty: honour cannot corrupt him, who can endure disgrace: pleasure cannot seduce him, who can endure pain; in short, nothing can prevail over him, who can endure all things, waiting the Lord's time for his deliverance and reward. Over him the evil one hath no power, and all the comfort to be had in this world is his. It is vain to say, "Blessed is the man that hath no trouble;" for there is no such man, nor ever was, nor ever will be; but we must say, "Blessed is the man who best beareth that portion of trouble, which falleth to his share."

VI. The manifold inconveniencies of impatience will set this truth off to great advantage. As patience

\* Eccclus. ii. 14.

tience is the attribute of God, impatience had its beginning from Satan. "Through envy of the devil (saith the wise man) came death into the world." And whence proceeds envy, but from impatience of beholding the happiness of another? Impatience and malice therefore had one father, and they have grown together in his children ever since. An impatient desire of the forbidden fruit lost paradise, which patience to persevere in obedience to the commandment, had preserved to this day. Impatient at beholding his brother's sacrifice accepted, and his own rejected, Cain murdered Abel. Unable, through impatience, to bear the uneasiness of hunger, Esau sold his birth right. Through impatience the patriarchs, moved with envy at the love which Jacob bore to Joseph, and the predictions of his exaltation, sold their brother into Egypt. Through impatience the Israelites, when Moses was gone up into the mount, turned aside to idolatry. Through impatience of a superior, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, became schismatics and rebels. And, to mention no more examples, through impatience of sound doctrine, and wholesome reproof, the Jews killed the prophets, and crucified the Son of God. In a word, as Patience is the foundation of all good, impatience is the seed-plot of all evil, which may not improperly be called "impatience of good;" as no man commences vicious, but for want of patience to persevere in virtue, and to resist temptation. And as that which is the cause of sin can be but an ill cure for sorrow, he that is impatient under any load which it pleases God to lay upon him, only renders it heavier, and new points the thorns of the Fall, that they may the more sensibly gall and afflict him. All sufferings are infinitely aggravated by

by impatience, and some owe their very being to it; insomuch that a peevish fretful temper will be "vexed, even as a thing that is raw," by every object it touches; it will most ingeniously contrive to keep itself always on the rack, on account of trifling incidents, which, in a mind endued with the grace of patience, could not have produced the least shadow of uneasiness. In this therefore, as in other cases, God hath annexed a blessing to virtue, and hath made man's real happiness to consist in the performance of his duty.

Lastly, let me set before you, in one view, the incomparable excellencies and advantages of this lovely grace of Patience. Patience then commends us to God, and keeps us his. Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility: Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stills anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, consummates martyrdom: Patience produces unity in the church, loyalty in the state, harmony in families and societies; she comforts the poor, and moderates the rich: she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach: she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be the first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured: she delights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving: she adorns the woman, and approves the man: is loved in a child, praised in a young man, admired in an old man: she is beautiful in either sex, and every age. Behold her appearance and her attire. Her countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven unspotted by the shadow of a cloud,

cloud, and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eye-brows sit chearfulness and joy. Her mouth is lovely in silence; her complexion and colour that of innocence and security; while, like the virgin, the daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversary, despising and laughing him to scorn. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand she holds a sceptre in the form of a cross. She rides not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion, but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace.\*

If, therefore, to be made like unto God; if to be conformed to the image of Christ; if to follow the precepts of the Gospel; if to write after the copies of saints; if to render our present state comfortable, and insure our final redemption from sin and sorrow; if to avoid the manifold inconveniences of impatience, and enjoy the incomparable excellencies and advantages of patience; if these are things desirable; let us from henceforth give ourselves to the pursuit of this divine virtue; let us "follow after Patience." And for this purpose, let us adore and imitate the long-suffering of God; let us contemplate and transcribe into our practice the patience of Jesus Christ; let us study and fulfil the precepts of the Gospel; let us look at and emulate the examples of the saints; let us consider and alleviate the sorrows of our pilgrimage; let us perceive and avoid the horrible consequences of impatience; let us court till we obtain the heavenly grace of patience, with her dowry of benefits and blessings

\* The portrait here presented to the reader is copied from TERTULLIAN'S noble treatise on the subject, to which we owe that of CYPRIAN. This Discourse is an abstract of both.

blessings conferred on her by Jesus Christ, into whose patience the Lord direct your hearts, until she have her perfect work in the salvation of your souls, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, in all churches of the saints, blessing, and honour and glory, and power, now and evermore. Amen.

## DISCOURSE XI.

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### THE GREAT ASSIZE.

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ACTS xvii. 31.

*He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.*

THE distinction between good and evil hath been from the beginning the great end of the law of heaven, at sundry times and in divers manners promulgated to the sons of men. From this celestial fountain particular systems of human laws have been drawn forth, and adapted to the exigencies of different ages and countries, by wise and good men; they have been enacted by the authority of kings with the advice of senates, and carried into execution by faithful and diligent magistrates, "to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of true religion and virtue." The advantages of these institutions, and the praise and honour which are due from all mankind to those who employ the treasures of learning, and exert the powers of eloquence, for the public good, must be evident to every one, who thinks but a moment upon the subject. The excellent Hooker closes a survey of Law, in all its different departments, with the following encomium, conceived and expressed in a manner peculiar to himself. "Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat

seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power. Both angels, and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

But true and just altogether as this character of law in general most certainly is, yet it must be confessed, that the penal sanctions of human laws will not always come up to the necessity of the case, nor will the medicine reach the disorder, in a multitude of instances. It is in the power of the civil magistrate to chastise many public enormities, to regulate in some measure the external deportment of men, and to preserve the frame of society from suffering those convulsions which must arise while living on a speedy dissolution. But when prudence hath enacted all her statutes; and incessant vigilance with the execution of them, men will still continue to "put evil for good, and good for evil." Masters of iniquity will creep from their dens to infest and annoy the public, although they cannot be dragged from thence, to suffer as they deserve. Much wickedness must remain unpunished, and great misery must go unrelieved. Avarice and ambition will conceive and bring forth crimes, of which no earthly tribunal can take cognizance. Some sins will be too common, and some sinners too powerful, to be ad adverted upon in this world. The prosperous villain will often die unmolested in his bed, and beguile the fruits of his oppression to his heir; while injured innocence shall descend before him with sorrow to the grave, and quickly pass away out of remembrance. The cries of or-

phans will still ascend to heaven; the tears will still run down the widow's cheek; and the poor man will frequently find no helper upon earth. This the royal preacher and judge of Israel saw, who was so renowned through all the world for his wisdom and justice; he saw and mourned the impossibility of preventing it. "I considered, says he, all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter."\* The conclusion which king Solomon drew from what he saw of this kind under the sun, must be adopted by us likewise. "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked."† The interests of virtue and justice require that many causes should be heard, which cannot be brought to a trial here below; and therefore the day will surely come, when God shall erect a tribunal universal and scrutinizing as the light of heaven; where all those offences, which the best of magistrates taken from among men are necessitated to suffer and overlook, shall be enquired into by himself. And when we behold this august assembly, our thoughts are naturally carried on to that great and awful process, the consideration of which will furnish the best rules for the conduct of all who are concerned in these earthly judicatories; from whence there lieth an appeal to the judgement-seat of Christ. There every cause must be re-heard, and finally determined, until virtue and vice shall be distinguished by the voice of God adjudging them to separate habitations for evermore. "He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained."

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\* Eccles. iv. 1.

† Eccles. iii. 17.

The words direct us to employ our meditations on the appointment of a day for judgment; the person and appearance of the judge; and the judgment itself.

Man may abuse his liberty, and transgress the law of the great King; but the punishment will follow and overtake the offence, though not immediately; nor can we deduce any inference from its being deferred, but that God is merciful, and that the sinner should repent. The day of vengeance was fixed from the foundation of the world; but it was likewise then determined, that another day should precede it, commensurate to the duration of this present system, which may be called the day of man, when the earth is given into his hands, and he executes his will upon it. Now he may "rejoice, and let his heart cheer him;" he may "walk in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes;" he may devote his youth to pleasure, sacrifice his manhood to ambition, and wear out his old age in avarice. He may corrupt the innocent for the indulgence of the first, depopulate kingdoms for the gratification of the second, and impoverish thousands to satisfy the cravings of the last. But let him know, that "for all these things God will bring him into judgment," in that day, which the Scriptures therefore stile *his* day, "the day of God," or "the day of the Lord." Then God shall speak, and man must hear; then the viol and the harp shall no longer lull the effeminate in sensuality, nor the trumpet any more rouse the warrior to the battle; and then the thousands of gold and silver shall have lost all their charms in the eyes of the miser. In that day, the merry hearted shall sigh, shame shall be the portion of pride, and covetousness shall inherit eternal poverty.

ty. Of these two days, the day of man, and the day of God, which give so very different an aspect to the world and all that is therein, the sacred history holdeth forth to us many significant and instructive representations in the divine proceedings with regard to particular persons, cities, and kingdoms. These answer the same end with the solemn scene now before our eyes, being intended as preludes, or (if I may so speak) as *rehearsals* of the judgment to be finally executed upon the world of the ungodly. Thus, when the divine long-suffering waited in the time of Noah; when the wicked vexed the soul of righteous Lot in Sodom; when Pharaoh oppressed the church in Egypt; when the ten tribes, revolting from the service of God, and the house of David, became and continued schismatics, rebels, and idolaters; when Zedekiah threw the prophet Jeremiah into the dungeon, for declaring the will of heaven; and when the Jews crucified Christ, and persecuted his apostles, for the same reason; then was it, respectively in each case, the day of man. But it was the day of God, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the antediluvian generations swept away from the face of the earth; when the windows of heaven were opened, to rain fire and brimstone upon the cities of the plain; when Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore; when Salmanazar led Ephraim away into Assyria; when Nebuchadnezzar carried Judah captive to Babylon; and when the Roman armies overthrew Jerusalem, and set fire to the gates of Zion. But the united terrors of all these partial visitations will enable us to form only a faint idea of that great and terrible day, when God "shall judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained."

Let

Let us consider the person and appearance of him who shall then come to be our judge.

The text characterizes him by the words, "that man whom he (God) hath ordained." The human nature of our Lord, ever intimately and indissolubly united to the divine, being, after his resurrection, taken up to heaven, was thereupon in form, amidst the acclamations of angels and beatified spirits, invested with the glory and dominion of the Godhead, to be from thenceforth displayed and exercised in the government of his church; until the final act of judgment shall close the amazing scene, and put a period to the mediatorial kingdom; which when the Son, the man Christ Jesus shall have delivered up to the Father, then God, or the blessed Trinity, shall be all in all, reigning and ruling to eternity, as was the case from eternity, previous to the intervention of the Christian system. In the mean time, as the light which fills the circumference of heaven, penetrating to the utmost bounds of creation, and giving life and motion to all things that live and move, proceedeth forth from its central throne in the body of the sun; so the riches, and the wisdom, and the providence, and the power, and the majesty of the Deity, are dispensed to mankind, through the glorified humanity of the holy Jesus; to whom every creature in heaven and earth is therefore taught to ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power. Thus hath it been done unto the man whom God delighteth to honour. And for this reason it is said, that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son;" in exact conformity to what St Paul asserteth in the text, that "God shall judge the world" in the person of his Son Christ Jesus; "he shall judge the world by that man, whom,"

whom," having united to himself, "he hath ordained" and constituted head over all things, for that purpose.

And by whom should God judge mankind, but by that man by whom he first redeemed them? "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and God in Christ will reward every man according to his works." He who took upon him the form of a servant, was crowned king of glory; and crowned for that reason. "Because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name;" therefore by himself he hath sworn, that to him, when sitting on the throne of judgment, "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that the man Christ Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And can there then be a tongue, which doth not exult in the confession of the glorious and salutary truth? For surely had heaven indulged us in the option of our judge, where could all our wishes have centred, but in a man like ourselves; our near kinsman, our brother, as concerning the flesh; one who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; one in all things tempted like as we are, and therefore touched with a feeling of our infirmities? In whose hands should we rather desire to see the law, than in his, who, having himself fulfilled it for us, bestows on repentance what was only due to innocence? Whom can we behold with so much comfort on the judgment-seat, as the person who once stood at the bar, and suffered the execution of an unjust sentence, that we might escape the execution of a just one? And since we must needs be tried by unerring wisdom, impartial justice,

justice, and boundless power, what a reviving consideration is it, that they are under the direction of infinite and tenderest mercy? Abused and insulted mercy indeed will rule with a rod of iron, and no wrath can be so terrible as that of the Lamb: but the humble penitent, believing in Jesus as a Saviour, and obeying him as a Master, shall behold with joy the golden sceptre reached forth, in the day of his appearance as a judge.

The signs which are to precede that appearance, and like so many heralds to prepare the way for it, shall be eminently calculated for the purpose. Strange and portentous phenomena shall cause a fearful looking for of judgment, while every part of the creation shall discover horrible symptoms of its approaching dissolution. The heavens, those most beautiful and glorious of the works of God, shall shrink at the prospect of the fire in which they are to melt; and the powers of the heavens, which sustain the world, shall be shaken, as the leaves of the wood are shaken by a mighty wind. The sun, that marvellous instrument, that fountain of light, that heart of the system, whence are the issues of life, and health, and joy, shall suddenly cease from shining, and by that means depriving the moon of her borrowed brightness, shall leave the astonished inhabitants of the world in darkness and the shadow of death. The stars, quitting their stations and courses, and falling in wild disorder on each other, shall increase the horrors of the night spread over the world, an image of the darkness soon to receive the wicked for ever. The sea meanwhile will rise into vast mountains, and roll itself upon the shore, with the most tremendous and terrifying noise. All these things shall come upon the earth, at a time when it is filled with wars and  
rumours

rumours of wars; when there shall be sore distress of nations, visited with all the judgments of God, and become the scourges and destroyers of each other; when divine truth, like the sun, shall be obscured; when the church, as well as the moon, shall be turned into blood, through the abundance of persecutions; and when they, who, for the brightness of their doctrines and the purity of their lives, shone as the stars, through the prevalence of iniquity and temptation, shall fall away from their integrity, minding earthly things, and worldly interests. Consternation and perplexity unutterable shall seize and distract the hearts of men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the changes about to happen.

And now, the voice of that trumpet, which was once heard from the top of Sinai, shall again be heard from heaven; and the judge of all the earth shall make his entry with power and great glory, having in his retinue an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the righteous. Thus attended, he shall descend towards us, riding upon the clouds of heaven, and take his seat on the throne prepared for him. There he shall be seen, in the form and fashion of a man, exceeding glorious, clothed with the robes of majesty and honour, from whence we may suppose him opening his commission, in those words of his own; "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The apostles are placed around him; the court is set; and all things are prepared for him to "judge the world in righteousness." The nature and manner of this judgment call for our strictest attention.

Let

Let us therefore transfer our thoughts from a temporary tribunal to the throne of eternal judgment. And here it must be considered, that as the whole world is become guilty before God, so we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Not only they who shall be found alive at his coming, but they also who shall have been detained by death in the prisons of earth and sea. For at the sound of the last trumpet, the prison doors shall be opened, and all that are within shall come forth to judgment. "I saw the dead," saith the well beloved John, "I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God." All the senates that ever were convened, and all the assemblies that ever met upon business or pleasure; all the armies that were ever conducted into the field, and all the generals who conducted them; all the kings and princes who ever swayed a sceptre, and all the multitude of the nations that were ever in subjection to them; in a word, all the men and women that shall have lived, from the first pair to their last born son and daughter, are to appear together, and to take their respective trials, at the day of the great assize. High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, will then be distinguished only by their virtues and their vices; so that the whole world shall perceive and acknowledge, that "God is no respecter of persons." The injured virgin, the afflicted widow, and the oppressed orphan, shall then see those, face to face, who have spoiled them of their innocence, their reputation, or their substance. There men shall meet all those who have seduced them, or whom they have seduced, into the ways of sin; and all those who have directed and encouraged them, or whom they have directed and encouraged, to proceed in the paths of righteousness.

ousness. From the former they shall turn away, with shame and fear; the latter they shall behold with joy and rejoicing. There they shall view the wisdom of religion in the persons of the righteous, and wonder why they did not see it before, and give themselves up to the study of it; there they shall clearly behold the folly of irreligion in the persons of the wicked, and be astonished at their insensibility in following so hard after it. Amidst all this unimaginable multitude, there shall not be one idle and unconcerned spectator; not one that shall have leisure to trouble himself with the affairs of his neighbour. Every man will have a cause to be heard, and how will he be straightened, until it be determined?

The prisoners, thus brought to the bar, are to be judged concerning the counsels of their hearts, the words of their lips, and the works of their hands, which will be found registered against them in the volumes of their consciences. These volumes indeed are often closed during the present life, by the hands of negligence and forgetfulness. But at the last day they shall be unfolded to all the world. These, perhaps, are the books, which, as Daniel and St John inform us, shall be opened before the throne of Christ, that men may be judged out of those things which are written therein. The dust shall be wiped away from these important writings; each obliterated character shall be renewed and restored; and a light shining from above shall make them legible to every eye. There is nothing now hidden, which shall not then be known; nothing spoken or done in the secret chambers, which shall not be proclaimed in public. Conscience shall then do the work perfectly, which, through our own faults, it doth at present imperfectly; and we shall know,

know, as we are known; we shall know ourselves, as God knoweth us. But besides this, the great Accuser shall stand forth at the last day in his proper character, and aggravate with all his malice the sins, to the commission of which he tempted the ungodly. "These wretches," may he say to the judge, "my power never created, nor my providence sustained; I never was incarnate, nor did I ever hang three hours upon the cross for them; I gave them no grace, and promised them no glory. Yet, by their own choice, they have forsaken thee, who didst all this for them, and voluntarily yielded themselves servants to me. Mine therefore they are, and with me shall be their portion." They who have beheld the countenance of a malefactor, when suddenly confronted by an accomplice appearing as an evidence against him, may form some idea of that confusion which shall overwhelm the sinner, when conscience, awaking out of sleep, shall witness his iniquity to his face; when the very thoughts of his heart shall be made manifest, and the tempter shall be his accuser.

Nor shall the faithful escape the malice of him who is styled the Accuser of the brethren; but he shall accuse them also before their God; alledging against them the follies of their youth, and the infirmities of their old age; their fruitless repentances, and frequent relapses; their excesses in the pleasures of sense, and their deficiencies in the duties of religion; the wanderings of their prayers, and the coldness of their charity. And alas, if God should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who could stand? But for those who believe, upon the preaching of the Gospel, who lay hold on the benefits of that act of grace, and come in upon the easy terms of the Christian covenant, for them there is *ἡ ἀποκατάστασις*,

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an *advocate* ready to appear, even the Spirit, which now "maketh intercession for them," and shall do the same at the last day; against the allegations of Satan, pleading the merits of the Redeemer, and the promised pardon made effectual by grace; what he wrought *for* his people, and what he wrought *in* them; the groans and the tears of the penitent, the fastings and the watchings, the prayers and the alms of the faithful; the weakness and imperfection of which shall be forgiven, and they shall be accepted, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the beloved; through whose blood all shall be saved, who depart in the faith and fear of God, notwithstanding their lapses through infirmity, in the days of their flesh. These therefore go to the portion on the right hand, because the Lord their God doth answer for them. They shall hear the joyful sound of pardon and peace: the angels who ministered to them, and often rejoiced at their repentance, shall place them in everlasting habitations of pleasure and glory; while the wicked, forsaken by their guardians, and condemned by the righteous judgment of their God, are consigned over to the executioners of eternal vengeance.

A consideration of these important truths suggesteth the best rules for the conduct of those who are concerned in human judicatories.

Mindful therefore of "that man by whom God shall judge the world in righteousness," he who sitteth on the seat of judgment, as a representative of an earthly sovereign, will conduct himself likewise as *his* minister, "by whom kings and princes decree judgment," and all the kings and princes, with all in authority under them, must one day appear. At present, "God judgeth in the congregation of princes," concerning the manner

in which they exercise the power delegated to them; but hereafter he shall *fit* as a *judge* even of them, who, by reason of that delegated power, are stiled *Gods*. The care then of the magistrate, when he goeth up to the judgment-seat, will be, to put on righteousness as a glorious and beautiful robe; and to render his tribunal a fit emblem of that eternal throne, of which justice and judgment are the habitation.

Mindful of those holy and exalted personages, who shall sit with their Lord, upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they to whom the laws of their country commit the lives and properties of their fellow subjects, will not suffer themselves to be biassed by any worldly considerations. They will neither be intimidated by the frowns of the mighty, nor seduced by the promises of the opulent, to depart one step from the disinterested uprightness and integrity, which characterize the apostles of the Son of God.

Mindful of that true and faithful witness which every man carries in his bosom, which no gift can blind, no power can silence, or prevent its appearing, to testify concerning his thoughts, his words, and his actions, at the last day, they who are called upon to give evidence, will do it with simplicity and sincerity; neither palliating the crimes of the guilty, nor aggravating the calamities of the wretched; but so speaking "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," as their consciences will hereafter infallibly do, and as they expect help from the God of their salvation, in that dreadful hour.

Mindful of that blessed and gracious Spirit, who now "make thintercession for us with unutterable groanings," and who shall plead our cause at the

judgment seat of Christ, the advocate will rejoice in the godlike task of patronizing the injured and oppressed; of contributing, by his skill and industry, towards the elucidation of truth, the detection of villany, and the vindication of innocence. But he will never employ his learning for the establishment of falsehood, nor display his eloquence in favour of injustice.

Mindful of their happy lot, whom mercy shall receive to glory, and of their sad estate, whom justice shall hurry away to torments, we shall all provide against that day, which is to determine our fate for everlasting ages. Should a door of hope be opened to those unhappy wretches who are now reserved in chains, to be brought forth to judgment before an earthly judge, how eagerly would they press into it? Could sorrow for their past offences, and unfeigned resolutions of amendment, procure the royal pardon, restore them to a state of probation, and enable them to lay hold on life, how thankful would they be for the offer, how readily would they close with the proposal? This favour is graciously vouchsafed to us. For "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. The judge standeth before the door," but his entrance is not yet. The evangelical act of grace continueth in full force, and all are invited to partake of the benefits of it; that so, having repented, and believed the Gospel, having kept the faith in a pure conscience, and kept it unto the end, they may obtain their pardon under the seal of the living God, and receive the promised reward, in the day of eternal recompence. For "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." While therefore we bless God, who preserveth to

us the administration of justice in our land, let the present solemnity, by reminding us of the trial we likewise must undergo, be made profitable in things pertaining not only to this life, but also to that which is to come; that so, when we shall all meet again, after our separation by the chances of life, and the stroke of death, we may remember that we met on this day; and remember with pleasure, that we met not in vain.

## DISCOURSE XII.

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### THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

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ROM. xiii. 4.

*He is the minister of God to thee for good.*

IT is impossible for any one to consider, with attention, the harmony in which all the parts of the natural world conspire to act for the benefit of the whole, without feeling an ardent desire to learn, by whom and in what manner they were first framed and compacted together; how the agents were suited to the patients, and the causes proportioned to the effects; so that the former have ever since operated invariably in the production of the latter; and the result hath been an uniform obedience to the laws originally imposed upon inanimate matter.

A diligent survey of the blessings, for which the moral world is indebted to civil polity, and the due execution of its edicts, must needs excite a curiosity equally earnest, and equally laudable, to enquire into the origin of so useful and necessary an institution; to know, at what time, and under whose direction, a machine was constructed, capable by a variety of well adjusted springs and movements, of controuling the irregularities of depraved nature, and of ensuring to us amidst the restless and contradictory passions and affections of sinful men, a quiet possession of our lives and properties.

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A "state of nature" hath been supposed by writers of eminence upon this subject, "when men lived in a wild and disorderly manner; and though they had a principle of restraint from religion, and a kind of general law, that exacted punishment of evil doers, yet, as the administration of this law was in common hands, and they had no one arbiter, or judge, with authority over the rest, to put this law, with any regularity, in execution; so, from the excess of self-love, many mutual violences and wrongs would ensue, which would put men upon forming themselves into civil societies, under some common arbiter, for remedy of this disorder"—And it hath been, accordingly, concluded, that "the civil magistrate was called in as an ally to religion, to turn the balance, which had too much inclined to the side of that inordinate self-love."

In the "wild and disorderly state" here supposed, when mankind were mere savages, it is not easy to conceive, how they had obtained "a principle of restraint from religion," or "a kind of general law, that exacted punishment of evil doers." And it is no less difficult to imagine, what benefit could accrue to them from either; since, as the religion had no priest, to teach and enforce it, the law had no magistrate, to promulgate, and to execute it. "The administration of this law was in *common hands*," that is, in the hands of every man, who had his own law, canon as well as statute, suited to his present occasion, convenience or caprice. And what was this, but to be truly and properly destitute both of law and religion?

As this independent state of nature was a state of perfect liberty; and as they, who had the happiness to live under so pure and primitive a dispensation,

tion, were doubtless, too sensible of their happiness, to exchange it readily for government, always liable to degenerate into tyranny and oppression, it is obvious to think, that when the project for "calling in the civil magistrate as an ally to religion" was first proposed it would not fail to meet with a very vigorous opposition." "An inordinate self-love," we find, was in possession: and no possessor is with more difficulty ejected. Of the privilege enjoyed by every man, to do without controul what was "right in his own eyes," every man would be exceedingly tenacious; and no one who thought himself, by his superior strength of body, or intellect, better entitled to an ox, or an ass, than his neighbour, could be presently made to see the propriety of his suffering, for the good of the community.

"The free consent of every individual, we are told, is necessary to be obtained for the institution of civil government." But upon what plain shall the universal assembly be convened? Or who, in a state of nature, hath authority to convene it? How shall the proceedings of this tumultuary congress of independents be regulated, or the votes of its members be collected? And when will all agree to invest some with a power of inflicting pains and penalties, which others cannot but be sensible they shall soon incur?

It is by no means reasonable to imagine, that each person would consent from thenceforth to be determined by a majority of the whole body, which might chance, upon questions of the utmost importance, to exceed the minority, only by a single vote. And that one half of the society should thus domineer over the other half, it would be deemed an infringement on liberty; to which men, born free

free and equal, might, with great appearance of reason, scruple to subject themselves.

It is indeed sometimes asserted, that "no man can submit himself to the absolute will of another:" in which case, he certainly cannot submit himself to any government whatsoever; since the *legislature*, in every government, is absolute, having a power to repeal or dispense with its own laws, upon occasions, of which itself is judge.

The reason assigned for the above assertion, "that no man can submit himself to the absolute will of another," is this, that "no man can give that, of which himself is not possessed, namely the power over his own life." But how then came any government to be invested with a power of life and death? And what would a government avail, which was not invested with that power? If laws, inflicting capital punishments, are frequently broken, in what a state would the world be, if there were no such laws? Here, then, is a *dignus vindice nodus*; and therefore, *DEUS interfit!* For, without the interposition of some power superior to human, a system of civil polity, calculated to answer, in any degree, the end of its institution, can neither be framed, nor supported.

And the truth is, when we reflect a little farther upon the subject, we cannot but perceive our apprehensions greatly shocked at the supposition, that the wise and good Creator, who formed mankind for society in this world, and designed to train them by a performance of its duties, for a more noble and exalted fellowship with angels in the world to come, should place them, at the beginning, in the above-mentioned wild and disorderly state of independence, to roam in fields and forests, like the brutes that perish, and to search for law and government,  
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where they were not to be found; that he should give them no rules, by whom, or how they should be guided and directed, but leave them to chuse for themselves, that is, to dispute and fight, and, in the end, to be governed by the strongest. One cannot think of multitudes in such a state of equality, with fierce and savage tempers and dispositions, prepared to contend for superiority, but it brings to mind that army, which, according to a pagan fiction, from the teeth of serpents sown in the earth, sprang up together, ready armed for battle, and destroyed each other.

But are these things so? Did God indeed, at the beginning, bring into being, at the same time, a number of human creatures, independant of each other, and turn them uninstructed into the woods, to settle a civil polity by compact among themselves? We know he did not. He who "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," or that law which his wisdom prescribes to his power; he who appointed a regular subordination among the celestial hierarchies; he who "made a law for the rain, and gave his decree to the sea, that the waters should not pass his commandment;" he who is the God of peace and order, provided for the establishment and continuation of these blessings among mankind, by ordaining, first in the case of Adam, and then again in that of Noah, that the human race should spring from one common parent.

Unless, therefore, some other origination of mankind be discovered, all equality and independence are at an end. The state of nature was a state of subordination; since, from the beginning, some were born subjects to others; and the power of the father, by whatever name it be called, must have

have been supreme at the first, when there was none superior to it. "To fathers within their private families," saith the judicious Hooker, "nature hath given a supreme power; for which cause we see throughout the world, even from the foundation thereof, all men have ever been taken as lords and lawful kings, in their own houses." And had children the power to chuse for themselves, what could they wish for, beyond the care and protection of a parent?

The creation of one pair, the institution of marriage, and the relations flowing from it, do so evidently shew subordination, at the beginning, to have been natural, and not founded on compact between peers, that two of the ablest advocates for a different hypothesis have, in fact, reduced the supposed compact at last to a *probable* or *tacit* consent of the children to be governed by their father. So that we may fairly look upon this point to be given up. Let us, therefore, go on to trace, as well as we can, the progress of society in the early ages of the world; to point out the manner in which a number of families became united under one civil polity, and governments arose, differing from each other, no less in form, than in extent.

As mankind multiplied, they necessarily found themselves obliged to separate and disperse; which they did accordingly, under their natural rulers, the chiefs of families and tribes, who, by reason of their longevity, saw themselves, in a course of years, at the head of a numerous train of descendants and dependents. By these means the earth became gradually filled with *little* governments; and as there was land sufficient for them all, in this state they continued, till through the workings of corrupted nature, disputes were engendered, which  
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terminating in war, victory at last declared for one of the parties, and the other was obliged to submit. Thus the *larger* governments arose by conquest, first swallowed up the *lesser* into themselves, and then contended with, and overthrew each other.

In the tenth chapter of Genesis, we have an account of the families, tribes, or lesser governments, with which the earth was overspread by the progeny of the sons of Noah. And in the same chapter we read, that, very soon after, by means of Nimrod, a *mighty one*, a warrior, a conqueror, the kingdom, or larger government of Babel began to rear its head, which, in process of time, under different names, became universal; till grown too great to support its own weight, it was subverted by the Persian, as the Persian was by the Grecian, and the Grecian by the Roman, out of which last were formed the empires, kingdoms, and states, at this day subsisting.

Thus it was, that the lesser governments were, from the beginning, founded in the *patria potestas*, and “multiplied as long as there was room enough, or they could agree together; till upon dissensions arising, the stronger, or more fortunate, swallowed up the weaker: and those great ones, again breaking in pieces, dissolved into lesser dominions.”\* Power dropped from the hands of one, but was always seized by another, before it could descend to the people, who indeed often changed their governors, but were never left to rove at large, without any government at all. Compact had no place, unless either when the lesser states united, as the Greeks did under Agamemnon, against a common enemy, which was only for a time; or else, when several states united, to go and seek fresh settle-  
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\* Mr LOCKE.

ments, they chose a head, with reserve of privileges to the leaders under him. As to those illegitimate forms of government called *aristocratic*, and *democratic*, they are comparatively, of late standing, and were indeed founded on compact, though generally among peers in rebellion, who having broken off from their allegiance to their natural rulers, and thrown the public into convulsions, and being determined to admit no common superior, were obliged, by the necessity of their circumstances, to settle themselves by compact, into a government, in which a certain mock equality of all was pretended, but a conjunct tyranny of a few was exercised. Orators, haranguing upon liberty, to get themselves a name among the populace, have extolled these forms, as the most accomplished and genuine of all. But if we consider, as an acute writer directs us to do, that "the utmost energy of the nervous style of Thucydides, and the great copiousness and expression of the Greek language seem to sink under the historian, when he attempts to describe the disorders, which arose from faction, throughout all the Grecian commonwealths;" that "Appian's history of the Roman civil wars contains the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures, that ever was presented to the world;" \* if, at the same time, we recollect the confusion and desolation once occasioned in our own country, by the project of erecting a government upon the plan of those famous democracies, we shall find no temptation to exchange a regular and well constituted monarchy for a RE-PUBLIC, especially as we must be first thrown into that imaginary political chaos, falsely called a state of nature, before the fair creation

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\* MR HUME.

can emerge. Like the Israelites of old, we must break off all that is precious and valuable, and cast it into the fire, that from thence may come out this boasted idol, at the feet of which kings and kingdoms are to fall down, and worship.

But if the foregoing be a true representation of facts, it may be asked, How came men into that savage state, in which many nations have been, and are at present, and which, if it be not a state of nature, yet doth much resemble that which is described as such, and perhaps gave birth to the ideas that have been entertained concerning it, and the political systems erected upon the supposition of it.

In order satisfactorily to answer this question, it must be remembered, that after the confusion at Babel, and the apostacy of the nations from the worship of the true God to idolatry, the world was gradually peopled by colonies sent forth from places overstocked. These colonies would consist of a mixture of people, often the meanest and lowest, sometimes driven out by conquering enemies, destitute of necessaries, to seek for settlements in distant quarters of the globe. If they fixed in a colder latitude, which rendered the want of clothes and a variety of well prepared food more sensibly felt, and in a place conveniently situated for traffic, they would employ all the understanding, of which they were masters, to contrive things first for use, and afterwards for elegance and ornament. But as this was a work of ages; as some imperfect notices of their ruder times would be handed down to their more polite ones; as they had no writing to record events; there must needs be a wide chasm in their history, between the desertion of their old settlements, and the completion of their new ones.

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So that when, in their civilized and polished state, they came, at their leisure, to look back, and guess at their own rise and progress, they would be lost in the darkness of those times, which preceded their present improvements. They would then imagine a state of nature, in which all were savages, and all were equal; they would fancy themselves to have been *Autographis*, judge of other nations by their own, make the system universal, and suppose all government to have been founded on compact among peers, in that "wild and disorderly state." As their laws, though of late date, were the first *written* accounts of their civilization, they would conclude that, till then, there had been no law, or civil polity in the world; though, in every country, there is a *jus scriptum*, and a *jus non scriptum*, of which the latter is always the oldest, being coeval with the constitution, or even prior to it, having sometimes been brought from the place whence the colony came, and perhaps delivered down from the beginning.

In circumstances like these, we are not to be surprised, if we find the historians, philosophers, and poets, among the Greeks and Romans, believing civil government to have arisen at first by an agreement among independent savages, as some of them imagined, that the world itself was formed by a fortuitous concourse of independent atoms, floating up and down in an infinite void. In constructing these visionary systems, political and physical, they displayed their ingenuity, and we can only lament their want of information with regard to what had happened in former ages, of which they had no means of obtaining more than was derived to them by an imperfect disjointed tradition, disguised in the dress of fable, and destitute of any authority to re-

commend and gain it credit. They erected the best fabric they could with the materials in their hands, and it would be unreasonable to expect brick from artificers, to whom straw was not given. But in us who have the Scripture history before us, it would be something worse than unreasonable, to overlook the information with which that supplies us, and have recourse to romantic schemes, which owed their being to the want of it.

On the other hand, let us suppose a colony, upon its migration, to have settled itself in a warmer climate, where men would find little or no occasion for clothes, houses, or the preparation of food by fire; and where they were cut off from all communication with the rest of the world. In this situation, they would not concern themselves about the conveniencies, much less the elegancies of life. Naked, or nearly so, living upon the fruits of the earth, and such other provision as the chase, or the net would procure, and strangers, for want of commerce, to arts and learning, they must continue in the deepest intellectual poverty, retaining only some of those superstitious customs, and diabolical rites, derived from their idolatrous ancestors, and imported with them. And thus degenerating, as they must of necessity do, every day more and more, they would come at last into that deplorable state of ignorance and barbarism, in which some nations are indeed found at this day. But is this a state of *nature*? Was this the state in which the Lord of all things placed the noblest of sublunary beings, the heir of glory and immortality, when his own hands had formed and fashioned him, and he had breathed into him the breath of life? No, surely, it is a state the most *unnatural* in which rational creatures, made in the image of their Creator, can be conceived to exist!

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A state into which, through apostacy from revealed truth, and consequent loss of all knowledge, by the just judgment of God upon them, some nations were permitted to fall, and are suffered to continue, *in terrorem* to others. And does a master of reason, an enlightened philosopher, in an enlightened age, send us to learn the first principles of government from Floridans, Brasilians, and Cherokees, because it is said, that they have no kings, but chuse leaders, as they want them in time of war? Though such is the force of primeval institution, such the necessity of government, and such the voice of nature concerning it, that even in America, upon its discovery, some nations, as the Mexicans, and Peruvians, were found in the state of the *larger* governments which arose by conquest, while others, in the form of the *lesser*, were subject to the chiefs of their respective clans and tribes. Savages themselves cannot live in a state of absolute equality and independence. In civilized communities, a ship cannot be navigated, a regiment cannot march, a family cannot be holden together without a subordination established and preserved. And was all government once dissolved, and the world really reduced to that state, out of which civil polity is supposed to have originally sprung, it would be a scene of uproar and confusion, and a field of blood, till the day of the consummation of all things.

A long and uninterrupted enjoyment of blessings is apt to extinguish in us that gratitude towards the author of them, which it ought to cherish and invigorate; and justice is the less regarded, when she maketh these her awful processions through the land, preserving peace and tranquillity in our borders, because she maketh them periodically and constantly. Far different would be our sensations.

at such times, had sad experience ever taught us what it was to see government unhinged, to want the protection of regal power, and the due execution of laws, by those to whom that power is delegated, "for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well." The course of nature often glides on unobserved, when there are no variations in it; and the sun himself shineth unnoticed, because he shineth every day. "Since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts of his law," says the excellent Hooker, "heaven and earth have hearkened unto his voice, and their labour hath been to do his will. But if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch, erected over our heads, should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and, by irregular volubility, turn themselves any way, as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now, as a giant, doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand, and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, and her fruits pine away, as children at the withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief; what would become of man himself, whom these things do all now serve;" and how would he look back upon those benefits, for which, when they were daily

daily poured upon him in boundless profusion, he forgot to be thankful?

While, therefore, we partake, in so eminent a degree, the benefits of civil polity, let us not be unmindful of our great Benefactor. Let these solemn occasions serve to remind us, that there is an intimate connection between religion and government; that the latter flowed originally from the same divine source with the former, and was, at the beginning, the ordinance of the most High; that the state of nature was a state of subordination, not one of equality and independence, in which mankind never did, nor ever can exist; that the civil magistrate is "the minister of God to us for good;" and that to the gracious author of every other valuable gift we are indebted for all the comforts and conveniencies of society, during our passage, through this turbulent scene, to those mansions, where, as violence is no more committed, punishment is no more deserved; where eternal justice hath fixed her throne, and is for ever employed in distributing rewards to her subjects, who have been tried, and found faithful.

## DISCOURSE XIII.

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### THE PRODIGAL SON.

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LUKE XV. 32.

*It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad :  
for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and  
was lost, and is found.*

THESE words conclude the parable of the Prodigal Son. A parable, for its variety of incidents, and the affecting manner in which they are related, remarkably beautiful, even in the letter of it. A younger son, gay and thoughtless, as youth often is, grown weary of being in the house and under the direction of a kind and tender father, desires to have his fortune consigned over to him, that he may go out into the world, and manage for himself. Having obtained his request, he immediately makes use of the so much wished for liberty and independency, quits the habitation of his father, and takes his journey into a far country. Here, falling into bad company, and strong temptations, he found his good resolutions presently staggered; and his old principles not being firmly fixed, and having no support, soon gave way to a set of new ones, better adapted to the times, and the fashion of the country he was now in. Loose practices were the necessary consequence of false principles; and as the paths of sin are not only slippery, but all upon the descent too, he fell from one wickedness

ness to another, plunged into all manner of riot and debauchery, and spent the last farthing. To complete his misery, there arose at that time a mighty famine in the land where he was; and he was soon at a loss where to get a piece of bread. Nay, to so great extremity was he driven by the violence of the famine, that having been forced to submit to the very abject employment of feeding swine, he tried in vain to satisfy the cravings of nature, with the dry and empty husks that the swine did eat. These had nothing in them fit to nourish the human body. Hungry and thirsty, his soul fainted in him, and there was no man that took any thought or care about him. The affliction was sharp; but the case required it; and now it began to work the intended cure. For by this time the sense of his misery had, through God's grace, brought him to a sense of his folly, from which that misery flowed; and when he was starving at night in the fields with cold and hunger, he could not help thinking of the happy souls he had left behind him in his father's house, where there was joy, and comfort, and plenty of every thing. In that house he was once a beloved son. But his wickedness had been too great to suffer him to hope he should ever be owned there again in that capacity. Tribulation is the school of humility, and an excellent school it is. For by it the man whose pride and gaiety of heart were such, that he could not bear to stay in the house where he was a son, became so very meek and submissive, that to be in that same house as an hired servant, was now the utmost of his wishes. Nay, he hardly could bring himself to hope, that his father would take him in again, even as a servant. In fear and trembling therefore he arose, and returned to him whose  
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face he was yet afraid, though so desirous to see. But so, the bowels of the good old man yearned after his lost child, and he was continually looking out for him; so that at his return, he saw him while he was yet a great way off; and with an heart overflowing with love and joy, ran forth to meet him, embraced him in his arms, fell upon his neck, and kissed him. He would hardly stay to hear his humiliation of himself, and confession of his unworthiness, but ordered his servants instantly to produce the best robe, and put it upon him, and to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and to bring forth the fatted calf, and kill it, that they might eat and be merry. All this was accordingly done, and now there was nothing to be heard but music and melody, and the voice of joy and thankfulness, in that house. But the elder brother, who had lived with the father, and happened at this time to be abroad in the field, about his business, coming home and drawing near to the house, was surprised with the noise of music and dancing; and calling one of the servants out, he asked what it meant? The servant told him, that his long lost brother was come home again, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. Upon this, instead of participating in the common joy, he suffered pride and envy to get possession of his heart; he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore came his father out, and intreated him; to whom he complained, that having served him so long, without transgressing at any time his commandments, he had never had so much as a kid given him, that he might make merry with his friends; but as soon as this other son was come, who had devoured his living with harlots, the fatted calf had been killed for him.

him. Son (says the good old man to him) thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine, so that thou mayest have a feast at any time, or rather indeed hast a continual feast; but surely, upon such an extraordinary occasion as this, it was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Such is the parable of the Prodigal Son, according to the letter. Let us now endeavour to discover the spirit and interpretation of this beautiful parable.

“A certain man had two sons.” This father is God himself, the father of both Jew and Gentile, represented here, as in many other places, under the figure of the two sons. The Jew is considered in Scripture as the elder; the Gentile as the younger. For thus, the rejection of the Jew, and the acceptance of the Gentile, were shewed forth by the rejection of Cain, and the acceptance of Abel; the rejection of Ishmael, and the acceptance of Isaac; the rejection of Esau, and the acceptance of Jacob. These two sons, Jew and Gentile, at the beginning, lived together in their father’s house, that is, the church, which (as says St Paul) is “the house of the living God.” There, under their father’s immediate protection, they partook alike of the divine promises and sacred services, and had all things common; and there was, for some time, no difference between them.

“But the younger son said unto his father, father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; and he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, he gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and spent his substance with riotous living.” In these words is described

described the departure of the Gentiles from God, who having conferred his divine promises, and in them the riches of the kingdom of heaven, on all alike, is said to have "divided his living between his two sons." The elder, the Jew, continued with him in the church. This we know by the history of Abraham and his posterity, till the coming of Christ. But the younger, the Gentile, growing weary of the service of God, and fond of independency, and the liberty of making his own religion, gathered together all the talents and abilities bestowed upon him, with the knowledge he had acquired from the divine revelations and institutions, "and took his journey into a far country," in other words, he went out from the presence of God in his church, and in his heart departed far from the Lord. Whence we often find the Gentiles spoken of, under the phrase, "Those that are A FAR OFF." Thus this poor silly prodigal became (as St Paul styles him) "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." The promises and services carried off by him were applied to false objects; and he soon "wasted his substance," the riches of his understanding, "in riotous living," and devoured his estate, the means by which his spirit was to be supported, with harlots; in a word he fell into idolatry, which not only is itself spiritual fornication, but opened a door to all manner of lasciviousness, by introducing it even into the temples and services of the gods. For which reason St Paul closely connects them in his account of this very transaction, the apostacy of the nations, Rom. i. "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image—WHEREFORE God also gave them

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up to uncleanness." But let us proceed to consider the consequences of this behaviour.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want."

Having forsaken God, and lost his grace and love, and at length all knowledge of him, he could find nothing elsewhere but that poverty, misery, and want, which the fall had brought upon the earth. This wretched state of the Gentile world is pictured to us by the lively and striking idea of a famine. "There arose a mighty dearth in that land," a mighty dearth and scarcity of divine knowledge, which is the bread of life to the soul; for "man doth not live by bread alone, but by the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." A famine of this sort is thus described by the prophet Amos; "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." This was exactly the case of the Gentiles, when they had squandered away the riches of divine knowledge, which they had received from their heavenly father at the beginning. Then there arose a sad famine of the word of God, and they began to be in want of something that would satisfy the empty soul. Then their philosophers and seekers after wisdom ran to and fro from one end of the earth to the other, to procure a little true religious knowledge; but it was not to be found. And the famine was over all the face of the Gentile world, and the land fainted by reason of the famine. But

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as there was no true bread of life to be procured, the soul must endeavour to satisfy itself with something. Accordingly, we read of our young prodigal, that,

“He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.”

“No man (says Christ) can serve two masters.” But one he must serve. And if he quits the service of God, he soon becomes a slave to the devil. This was the case of the Gentile prodigal. When he had deserted the service of his heavenly father, God Almighty, the next thing we hear of him is, that he had joined himself to another master, namely, to him who, since he has been cast out of heaven, walks up and down in the earth, seeking those who have left their old master and father, to hire them into his service. The prodigal was in that condition; and accordingly Satan took possession of him. For thus St Paul tells the Ephesians, that before their conversion, “they walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” And the design of the Gospel is elsewhere said to be, to “turn the Gentiles from the power of Satan to God.” While they were Gentiles therefore, they were under “the power of Satan.” Now the employment which the grand adversary of man’s happiness finds for him, when once engaged in his service, is this. He sends him into proper scenes of sin and wickedness, vanity and folly, there to gratify the desires of corrupt nature, enslaving him by this means to his own brutish lusts and passions. This is most exactly described in the parable, by  
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the circumstances of his being “sent into his master’s fields to feed swine;” to which ravenous and unclean animals, the insatiable, earthly lusts of concupiscence are, with great propriety, resembled in Holy Scripture. The misery of the employment is, that these lusts are never to be satisfied. A truth to which the heart of every sinner will bear a sad testimony. Besides, God made the soul of man for himself, and therefore bequeathed it unquietness, till possessed of its maker. Vain then is the employment of those, who seek to procure the happiness of the soul, by indulging the appetites of the body. Men are daily inventing new schemes to effect it, till diversion is grown a science, and amusement become a toil. But if we ask them, they will one and all tell us, it is not yet effected. Something, to a man possessed of all that earth can give him—Something is still wanting. O fools and slow of heart to believe what the prophets and the apostles have spoken! The comforts of religion are wanting, and these they will not look after; but still, copying the example of their ancestor, the poor Gentile prodigal, they would “sain fill their bellies with the husks which the swine do eat;” they are endeavouring to nourish their immortal spirits with the empty unsatisfying things of this corruptible world, which are calculated for the bodily appetites only. But let all who have followed this prodigal in his departure from his father, come hither, and hearken, and he will tell them what God hath done for his soul, and call them to follow the noble example he has set them in his return, and reconciliation.

And here, let us observe with attention a complete description of the process of true repentance and justification in the Gentiles, and all who are

sinners, like them. The violence of the famine had brought the wretched prodigal to the last stage of distress. He had tried in vain to satisfy himself with "that which was not bread. Hungry and thirsty, his soul fainted in him, and he drew near to the gates of death." But now the grace of God, which leadeth to repentance, began to work upon him. It had been ready to do so all along; but as it is said of Christ, that he "could do no mighty works in some places, because of men's unbelief," so his grace does not work upon men's minds, when they are determined not to suffer it. While the prodigal's heart was in the flutter, and hurry, and dissipation of pleasure and extravagance, no mighty works of salvation could be wrought in it. But when it was humbled by affliction, and broken with continual tribulation, it became a proper subject for the operations of divine grace. Accordingly, the good Spirit of God immediately began with his preventing favour, and led him step by step, till his repentance and reconciling were completed.

"And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

A sense of sin is the beginning of repentance, and a sense of misery begets a sense of sin. The Gentiles (and the case is the same with sinners of all ages) could not but feel the poverty and wretchedness into which they had fallen. And when a man feels himself miserable, it is but natural for him to consider how he came to be so. The cause appeared plain enough to the Gentile, when enlightened

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lightened at first by the Scriptures of the Old Testament dispersed in the Septuagint version, and then by the Gospel preached through all nations. Aided in his meditations by these helps, he quickly traced all his misfortunes up to the fountain head, which was his leaving the church, the house of the living God, his heavenly father. Now he began thoroughly to comprehend the misery of his state, and to envy the happiness of those who had continued in their father's house, and served him day and night in his temple. They were not confounded in the perilous time, and in the days of dearth they had enough, and to spare. They feasted ever-more at the table of their heavenly Father, and found the light of his countenance to be life, and his favour and grace as a cloud of the latter rain; while *his* soul was starving for lack of knowledge and truth, and frozen for want of charity. "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" He was now (as it is finely expressed) "come to himself," and to a remembrance of his true condition and interest. From the hour he left his father's house to this moment, he had been in a dream, and found himself just awaked out of what may be called a deep sleep, in the language of St Paul, who thus addresses a sinner, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise." Accordingly, being now awake, he determined instantly to *arise*, and tread back the steps by which he had departed from his father; to make a frank and full confession to him of his past sins; to acknowledge himself utterly unworthy of any favour at his hands; and to declare his readiness to submit to any penance, to live in any state of humiliation, that his father should be pleased to impose; only begging,

at any rate, to be admitted into the church, to serve him again. This resolution he had no sooner formed, but he made haste, and prolonged not the time to put it in practice. He arose, returned to his father, and said unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Which words, as put in the mouth of the prodigal Gentile, returning, at the preaching of the Gospel, to the church of God, the house of his heavenly father, may, it is apprehended, be thus paraphrased—"Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men; I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, which I from time to time, from the first hour of my departure, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful father. For thy son my Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive me what is past, and grant that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the confession which the church enjoins us poor prodigal sinners of the Gentiles to make, as often as we return from feeding upon *bushes* in the world, to eat the bread of life in our *father's house*. And a noble comment it is upon the short but full confession of the prodigal in the parable. Let us now hear what was the reception this returning penitent met with, and consequently,

consequently, what reception we shall meet with, when we return like him.

“But while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him;” and while he was confessing his sinfulness and unworthiness, “he said to the servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

Here let all sinners (and sinners we all are) behold the loving kindness of our heavenly father to those who truly repent and turn to him, as it was displayed towards the Gentiles, upon their conversion. The bowels of his mercy yearned over them in their lost estate; and he longed for their return, as a father for that of his child gone from him. When the time of life was come, he saw them while they were yet afar off, and had compassion on them, and ran forth to meet them by the preaching of the apostle, and embraced them in the arms of his mercy, and gave them the sure pledge and token of reconciliation and love, by the word and spirit of his mouth. No sooner did he behold them making their humble confession to him, meekly kneeling upon their knees, but he ordered his ministers to bring forth from the wardrobe of heaven the best robe, the robe of righteousness, and garment of salvation; that fine white linen, spotless and bright as the sun, which is the righteousness of saints, the wedding garment of the church of the redeemed. These robes the father commanded the ministers of his sanctuary to bring forth, and put them on the new converts, by in-

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vesting them in baptism with all the righteousness, merits, and graces of the Lord Jesus Christ; giving them, at the same time, a lively impression of his spirit, which is the seal of adoption, a pledge of the inheritance in heaven, an earnest of the eternal promises, a token of their espousals to the Lamb of God; signified in the parable by "putting a ring on his hand." Bestowing on them such graces and assistances as might enable them to walk in the way of his commandments, and in the practice of good works; to secure themselves from the thorns of worldly cares, and the mire of earthly pleasures; and to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy, the devil and his temptations; all which is described by "putting shoes upon his feet." And lastly, the ministers were to prepare the Christian sacrifice, on which the now accepted Gentiles were to feast at the table of their heavenly father, singing and making melody to the Lord, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven. "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord: bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. He hath remembered his mercy and truth; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Therefore make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the king." Such was the joy, at the reception of the returning prodigal, because he who had been dead in sin, was alive to righteousness; and he who had  
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been lost to the church for ages and generations, was found and restored to it. Well, surely, might they "begin to be merry." Who would not be merry with them? Who could have any objection to their being so? Alas! there is one that never would be merry with them, and to this day cannot bear that they should be so, but gnashes his teeth, and consumes away with envy. And that is our elder brother the Jew, whose unreasonable behaviour upon this occasion, with the father's just reproof to him, is represented to us in the concluding part of the parable.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came, and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant? And he said unto him, thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed for him the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering, said to his father, lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son was come, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

The Jews hearing the sound of the Gospel, and the voice of joy and rejoicing in the church, were continually "calling to the servants" of God, the apostles and first preachers of the word, and "asking

king what these things meant?" and were always answered, as in the parable, that "their brother was come;" that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life; that *they* were now come into the church; and the one great sacrifice was offered for them, and for all men. And are not the words of the parable fulfilled, to this day? "They are angry, and will not come in." No, not though their father, God Almighty, time after time came out, and intreated by the voice of his Son, by the preaching of his apostles, by the allurements of his mercies, and by the terror of his judgments. All, all would not do. Their father they rebelled against, his son they crucified, his apostles they persecuted, his mercies they forgot, and his judgments they defied. Seventeen hundred years are past; still, still "they are angry, and will not come in!" Their plea is, as represented in the parable, that they served God many years; that they never transgressed at any time his commandment; that God had not shewed them sufficient marks of his favour; but treated this worthless prodigal Gentile better than he had treated them. A plea, every article of which is full of pride, falsehood, and envy. Pride is at the bottom of all. They loved to justify themselves by the works of the law, as St Paul says of them; "going about to establish their own righteousness, by the works of the law, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ." Accordingly, their plea runs altogether in the boasting strain. First, "They had served God many years." Not to mention *how* they had served him, it was God that enabled them both to will, and to do; so that there was no room for boasting. Secondly, "They had never at any time transgressed his command-

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ment;" in other words, they thanked God they were not as other men were, adulterers, fornicators, extortioners, unjust, or even as this prodigal Gentile. Now, supposing all this to be true, they were still unprofitable servants; they had done only that which it was their duty to do. But St Stephen convinced them that they were infamous transgressors, having indeed received the law, but not kept it; so that what they reckoned matter of glorying, was in reality the sentence of their condemnation. In this part of their plea, therefore, there is a mixture of pride and falsehood. Thirdly, "God had not shewed them sufficient marks of his favour." This was false, for he was continually showering his benefits upon them; and for many, many years, their fleece had the dew, when all the rest of the ground was dry. Fourthly, "He treated the Gentiles better than he had treated them." This was false again, as well as envious; for if they would have come in, they might have partaken with the Gentiles in the feast and the joy, and been for ever with them in the church; nor would the accession of the nations have diminished aught from them, but rather it would have added an infinite increase of joy and pleasure to them, had the love of God and of their brother been in their hearts; as the light of the sun is not lessened, but increased, by being reflected at once from all the innumerable waves of the wide ocean. Indeed, the father in the parable, ever tender, and loving, and willing to try every way to bring them in, does not object their transgressions to them, but answers upon their state of the case; that even supposing they had served and obeyed him, as they said they had, they could never complain of wanting marks of his favour, seeing they had "ever been in his house," the church,

church, with him, as his children, and "all that he had was their's; for to them pertained the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; their's were the fathers; and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Why therefore should they be angry, because the poor Gentiles were suffered to partake of these good things, when they had qualified themselves for it by repentance and faith? And what sort of materials must their hearts be made of, when they could not acquiesce in that tender, merciful, and loving declaration of their heavenly Father—"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

Beholding therefore the sad consequences of departing from our Father's house, let us take up the resolution of the Holy Psalmist; "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Let us think that we hear our blessed Master, astonished, as it were, to see himself forsaken by so many of his disciples, saying unto us, as once he did to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" And let us answer with one accord, as they did by the mouth of St Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." But what was it that seduced the prodigal Gentile to leave so gracious a Father, and to quit the house where his glory dwelt? What but an impatience of restraint, a fond desire of independency, and of being wise above what is written. Warned therefore by his fate, let us love the discipline that withholds us from sin; let us glory (if we must glory) in that dependency on our Maker, and those whom his providence has set over us, by which alone, after all, the church and  
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the world are supported and preserved ; and let us at last learn to believe in God, and rest assured, upon his word, that the *wisdom* of this world is as unsatisfactory as its riches, honours, and pleasures ; and that amidst the greatest abundance of them all, “ a mighty famine will arise ” in the soul, for want of more substantial food, which, if it be not remedied in this life, by “ seeking meat from God,” will continue to torment, in those regions of sorrow, where hunger and despair are co-eternal.

Let the sinner, whom the chastising hand of God has brought to himself ; whose eyes have been opened by affliction, to behold his real state and condition ; who has felt the truth which he refused to believe, that the world is vanity, sin and folly ; let such an one listen to the admonitions of conscience and cherish the first dawnings of divine grace in his heart ; that so the Sun of Righteousness, there arising, may disperse every cloud, and cause every shadow to fly away ; till having by slow and imperceptible degrees ascended the heights of the sky, he stands fixed in his meridian, diffusing on all beneath him the perfect day. For however darkness may at present cover the transgressor, and gross darkness overwhelm his soul, as once it did the Gentile world, yet let him know, to his great and endless comfort, that upon his sincere repentance the Lord shall arise likewise upon him, and his glory shall be seen upon him. Let him only follow the example of the returning prodigal, and he shall not fail of *his* reward, even reconciliation, and peace, and love, and joy, and rejoicing, in the house of his heavenly Father.

Lastly, let us of the nations, whom undeserved mercy has numbered amongst the children of God, let us beware that we copy not after the pattern of the  
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the Jew, or envy him the glory of his future conversion and restoration. Rather let us endeavour to the utmost to forward so happy an event. And since of all human means, that of shewing him the dispensations of Jesus, whom his wicked hands crucified, in his own Scriptures of the Old Testament, is the most likely to contribute towards the blessed work, let this be an additional motive to us to study day and night the true import of those lively oracles. But since such a conversion as this must be most eminently the work of the Almighty, let not our most fervent prayers be ever wanting to him, that he would now at length look down from heaven upon his ancient people; that he would take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of his word, and so fetch them home to his flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites. May it be our happy lot, by our prayers and labours, to hasten the coming of that glorious day (though our eyes may not behold it) when the elder brother shall feel the just reproof of his Father piercing his inmost soul, and be prevailed upon to lay aside his pride, envy, and obstinacy; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet with the conversion of the Jews, and the two brothers, reconciled to their Father, and to each other, by the blood of Jesus, shall, with united hearts and voices, praise the Lord for his goodness, having each in his turn experienced, that his mercy endureth for ever.

## DISCOURSE XIV.

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### KNOWLEDGE AND CHARITY.

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I COR. viii. 1.

*Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth.*

IN a place dedicated to the advancement of Science, and before an audience of persons set apart for that purpose, it might seem an undertaking no less improper than invidious, to point out its ill effects, had not the great Doctor of the Gentiles authorised such a proceeding, and the present pious and judicious institution \* demanded it at our hands. No person ever entertained an higher idea of true wisdom than St Paul, who has employed the most exalted strains of divine oratory, to set forth the excellency of knowledge and understanding. But yet the holy Apostle saw, that learning makes not the man of God perfect; that something may still be wanting in him, who is at the top of intellectual attainments; and that the compleat scholar may fall short, at last, of the kingdom of heaven. He saw, that spiritual, like bodily wealth, unless used for the benefit of others, would prove no blessing to its owner, serving only to hasten his fall, and increase his condemnation. And therefore, that the wise man might not glory in his wisdom, but sink

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\* A Benefaction left by Mr MASTERS, for two Sermons to be preached on certain texts by him selected, tending to inculcate the duty of Christian *Humility*, as opposed to the pride of science, and to point out the true nature and end of the *ministerial office*.

into himself by humility, as he rises above others in understanding, remembering always the account he must make, proportionable to the talents delivered, the Apostle determines, that not only human learning, but the knowledge of all prophecies and mysteries, that is, of all the dispensations of God, and every truth in the Scriptures, and that knowledge formed into an orthodox faith, animated by a lively hope, will profit a man nothing, if Charity, or divine Love, be not superadded, which, like the vital heat in the human frame, may disperse and actuate all to the edification of the body.

This is the great argument of his epistle to the Corinthians; a people, in whom their reputation for polite literature, and distinguished taste, had produced not a little conceit of themselves and their endowments. This temper and disposition they most unhappily brought with them into the church, where, not being mortified, as it ought to have been, by the Spirit of the meek and humble Jesus, it began to display itself in religious, as it had before done in secular learning. The object was changed, but the passions were the same; and Christ himself was made the occasion of pride, envy, and contention, among those, who all alike professed themselves to be his disciples. The new converts were soon divided into little parties, struggling for the pre-eminence of their respective leaders, like so many sects of philosophers, rather than zealous for the glory of their Lord, as members of his one universal church. St Paul does not accuse them of ignorance. On the contrary, he bears them witness, that they were "enriched with all knowledge, and came behind in no gift;" but complains, notwithstanding, that they were still carnal; they did not "all speak the same thing," as brethren of one family,

family, and fellow members of the same body should do, but formed themselves into separate factions and schisms; insomuch, that he feared, lest, in contending for Knowledge, Charity should have been pulled in pieces of them, while all fought to excel for the sake of excelling, and not to the edifying of the church; all regarded their own glory, not the advantage of their brethren, whom they cared not how much they offended, so they had but an opportunity of manifesting their own superiority.

A remarkable instance of this presented itself in the case of meat offered to an idol, concerning which the Apostle tells them, "they had knowledge;" they knew "that an idol was nothing," and that therefore they might as well eat meat so offered, as any other, provided it was not brought to them as such, and made a test of their faith. But then he observes, there was not in every man that degree of knowledge. There were some who, through infirmity and over scrupulousness, could not so eat, without considering themselves as partakers of an idol-sacrifice. The danger therefore was, lest such, emboldened by the example of a brother better established in the faith, should be led to sin against their own consciences, and so through the other's greater knowledge a weak brother should perish, for whom Christ died, no less than for him that was stronger. Knowledge, thus used to the destruction of others, could never further the salvation of its possessor. And therefore St Paul declares, that if the case were to be pushed even to the utmost, Charity should make him wave all the privileges of his knowledge, for the edification of his brother. "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Upon this occasion it is, that he advances the general assertion in the text, which resolves itself into these two propositions—

- I. That Knowledge without Charity endeth in pride, and consequently in the destruction of him that hath it. "Knowledge puffeth up."
- II. That Charity directeth it to its proper end, the edification of the church; "Charity edifieth."

I. Knowledge without Charity endeth in pride; it *puffeth up*, saith the Apostle, it produceth an inflation in the mind, which, like a tumour in the body, carries the appearance of solidity, but has in reality nothing within, and only indicates a disordered habit. And indeed Knowledge, as well as faith, if it be alone, is vain; it is dead. For all knowledge is given as a means to some end. The means, abstracted from their end, cease to be means, and answer no purpose whatsoever. The end of Knowledge is action. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."\* Every article of the creed involves in it a correspondent duty, and it is practice alone that gives life to faith, and realizes Knowledge. What is true of human wisdom, with regard to things temporal, is as true of divine, with relation to things spiritual; "Through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, yea a man of knowledge increaseth strength; and by a man of understanding and knowledge the state of a land shall be prolonged." The science that terminates where it begins, in the intellect, what availeth it? Or what profit is there in the learning, which promoteth not, in any measure,

\* John xiii. 17.

measure, the interest either of the church or the state, of which its proprietor is a member? "The manifestation of the Spirit (as that Spirit himself testifies) is given to every man to PROFIT withal." \* Otherwise it is of no effect, and the man becomes, as St Jude finely describes such a character, like "a cloud without water," raised aloft, as it should seem by its appearance, for the benefit of those beneath it; but how wretchedly are they disappointed? It fails along before the wind, proudly swelling in the sufficiency of its own emptiness, instead of dropping fatness and plenty on the lands, over which it passes. "Knowledge puffeth up." And that this will always be the effect of it, where Charity is wanting, we may fairly conclude from hence, that it always has been so; as shall be evinced by an induction of particulars.

But before we consider the instances of this truth, which have happened upon the earth, we we must ascend into heaven; and if the lustre of the object be not too strong for our organs, there view the glories that once encircled Lucifer, the son of the morning, the bright leader of the armies above, first, as in command, so in the greatness of his Knowledge. What the prophet Ezekiel says of the prince of Tyre, seems primarily applicable to him. "He sealed up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. He was perfect in his ways from the day that he was created, till iniquity was found in him." † Confined not, like man, within the bounds of a material creation, or limited to ideas framed by analogy from sense, he beheld, without a glass, the wonders of the kingdom of heaven, and saw, face to face, the eternal power and Godhead of him who made him. He

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\* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

† Ezck. xxviii. 12.

saw, he knew; but he loved not. "His heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness." Conceit of his own excellency made him disdain the thought of man, in the person of the Messiah, being exalted over him; and he became, from the beginning, an opposer of the gracious counsel of infinite Love to redeem the human race. The promulgation of this counsel before the world, is assigned by some divines, as the time of the angels' fall; that being most probably the ground of the war begun in heaven against the head, and since carried on upon earth against the members.\* But however this be, certain it is, that through pride he fell. A proof to the learned of all ages, that Knowledge, without Charity, will turn a good angel into an evil one; an admonition to them, not to expect that that alone should put man in possession of heaven, which, because it was alone, cast Lucifer himself out of it.

Yet this has all along been the fatal mistake, and the Tree of Knowledge still proved the occasion of a fall. Next to the majesty of Lucifer at the head of the angelic legions, was the glory of Adam, the Lord of this lower world, in Paradise. Formed in the image of his Maker, to have dominion over the creation, he was replenished, for that purpose, with the treasures of wisdom from above; and the magnificence of his palace, great as it was, bore no proportion to the riches of his understanding. "He was in Eden the garden of God, every precious stone was his covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the sapphire, the emerald, and

\* See Mr LESLEY's *History of Sin and Heresy*, in the first volume of his *Theological Works*.

and the carbuncle, and gold." \* He had a perfect knowledge of the nature, use, properties, and operations of the creatures, expressed in the names imposed by him. Nor staid his wisdom here, but in the things that were made he beheld reflected, as in a faithful mirror, the invisible things of God, who had taught him so to do. With him he conversed frequently, as a man with his friend, in the holy sanctuary of Eden; that happy seat of instruction, contemplation, and devotion, framed, after the example of heavenly things, like the tabernacle, the temple, and the church, which have since the fall supplied, and are to supply, its place in the world, till all shall be fully restored at the resurrection of the just. There lived our first parent a life which we are now little able to conceive; a life not much short of angelical perfection, antedating by holiness, in the earthly copy, the felicity reserved for him, in the heavenly original. But man, though placed by God in the state of honour, did not continue in it. Knowledge was the temptation; and even in Paradise it proved but too successful. It wrought destruction, we find, by pride. "The serpent, says Eve, beguiled me;" or, as it is in the original, *elated, puffed me up*. † He persuaded her, it was not as God had said; she must know better. Revelation was an imposition upon the rights and liberties of the human understanding, and the command evidently contrary to the nature and reason of things; for "she saw the tree was pleasant to the eyes and good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Wisdom was to be acquired by a proper exertion of her faculties, and knowledge to be attained, without being obliged for it to the Revelation of God. Thus was she deluded.

• Ezek. xxviii. 13.

† דשׁימני.

deluded into scepticism under the notion of a *Free Enquiry*, and induced to renounce God and heaven, as her seducer had done before her, upon the principles of *the first philosophy*; hereby furnishing us with another sad proof, that Knowledge, without Charity, endeth in pride, and the destruction of the person who is possessed of it.

Were we to consider the several apostasies of mankind, after their restoration by the promise of a Redeemer, and the establishment of the church upon that promise, it might perhaps appear, that all the fruits of error and vice have sprung from the same root of bitterness. But as St Paul, concluding all under sin, has divided the world into Jew and Gentile, it may suffice to take a cursory view of each.

To begin with the Gentiles, of whose fall the Apostle gives this account. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." \* Lack of Knowledge, therefore, was not their original fault; "they knew God;" for that knowledge was universal in the family of Noah; and though depraved, it could not be quite extinguished for many generations. But Knowledge in the understanding, for want of Charity in the heart, did not operate to a holy obedience;—"When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful." The truth, held, or detained in unrighteousness, and imprisoned in an unholy conscience, passed not from their minds into their actions, that God might be glorified thereby, and some return made to him (for such he is pleased to esteem

\* Rom. i. 21.

esteem it) by the gratitude of his creatures. Instead of this, they were filled with fantastic dreams of their own perfection, which put them upon disputing with each other for place and precedence in Knowledge. "They became vain in their imaginations, *ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς*, their altercating reasonings." They wrangled upon every subject, till at length the most knowing among them gave up all for lost. Their learning consisted in being able to recount the various errors of preceding philosophers, and all that wisdom could do, was to deny the existence of truth. Thus it was, that "their foolish heart was darkened." The light which they had abused shone no more; the Sun of Revelation set, by their departure from it; the knowledge transmitted by tradition gradually died away like the twilight, and a long night of darkness and blindness of heart succeeded. The world by wisdom, and the efforts of its own reason, knew God no more. Wisdom indeed was what the philosophers still continued to profess; but "professing to be wise, they became fools;" and all may profit by their experience, which confirms the truth of the apostolical assertion in the text, that "Knowledge puffeth up."

Let us now turn our eyes towards the Jew. Behold him, the son of Abraham, and heir of the promises, invested with the privileges of God's chosen, "having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law," which he not only studies, but carries about, as a perpetual monitor, upon the borders of his garments, zealous for it, even to madness. Yet behold him become an outcast of heaven and earth, his law abrogated, his city burnt to ashes, himself a fugitive and a vagabond, without king, priest, prophet, temple, or habitation, a by-word and an hissing among all the nations of the earth.  
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Who is not curious to enquire into the cause of such astonishing misery, such unprecedented calamities? The cause is this. Knowledge puffed him up; his privileges became an occasion of boasting himself against his brethern, and envy eat out his Charity. "Going about to establish his own righteousness," upon the strength of his own wisdom, he rejected the Lord his righteousness, and nailed him, who is the source of wisdom, to the cross, persecuting to the death all who offered to preach that righteousness, and teach that wisdom, to a sinful and ignorant world.

When the distinction of Jew and Gentile ceased, and one church (for that reason called *Catholic*) comprehended within its pale the believers of both denominations, knowledge puffed men up into heretics and schismatics. Pride made them rather chuse to see themselves exalted at the head of a faction, than the church edified by their labours in an inferior station. This was the case in the church of Corinth, and has been the cause of every heresy and schism since. Novices, and persons whose heads are filled with religious notions, while their hearts and affections are not yet subdued by Charity, are apt to fancy themselves formed for something great and extraordinary. They think it matter of general lamentation, that talents like their's should be buried in obscurity. And therefore, since they cannot preside *in* the church, they are determined to preside *out* of it.

These instances, it is presumed, are sufficient to evince, that "Knowledge puffeth up;" Knowledge, I mean, without Charity; for had *that* accompanied it, all these things had never happened. Charity had kept Lucifer thining in his station, and rejoicing in the salvation of the human race. Charity

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city had prevented the transgression and fall of man. Charity had employed the knowledge of the Gentile in glorifying God who gave it, and that of the Jew in promoting the kingdom of the Messiah, and the conversion of his brethren; and Charity, among the members of Christ's body, had preserved it in peace and unity. But to shew more at large that it is Charity which directeth Knowledge to its right end, the edification of the church, was the

II. Thing proposed. And this will be best done, by setting before you some instances, the reverse of the foregoing.

If therefore we ascend a second time into heaven, we shall find that the principle which opposed and triumphed over the Knowledge of Lucifer, inflated by pride, was the wisdom of God actuated by Love. Praise and glory are due from man to all the divine attributes, for all were concerned in effecting his redemption. Wisdom contrived, and power executed; but Love set all to work, Love perfected and crowned the whole. "The Lord is a God of Knowledge;" but it was Love which communicated that knowledge to mankind; which made the eternal Wisdom to "rejoice in the habitable part of the earth, and delight to be with the sons of men." He is a God of power; but that could only terrify us, till Love employed it against our enemies. For which reason, when the Psalmist singeth, "Great is our Lord, and great is his power, yea and his wisdom is infinite;" he crowneth all by adding; "The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works." Pride would have used Knowledge to the aggrandizing itself at the expence of others; but Love turned it to the advancement of others, by humiliation of itself. The accuser of  
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man was cast down, and man, in the person of the Messiah, exalted to an union with God. The Knowledge, which terminated in itself, sunk into the lowest hell; while that, which fought the good of others, took its seat at the right hand of the most High. The Knowledge of Satan puffed him up, to the destruction of himself and his adherents; the Love of God built up the church of the redeemed, unto salvation and glory everlasting.

To reverse the sad effects of a vain thirst after Knowledge in our first parent, divine Love became incarnate, and appeared upon earth in a bodily shape, in the form and fashion of a man. "That which was from the beginning the disciples heard, they saw with their eyes, and their hands handled the Word of life." All that he did, and all that he suffered, he did and suffered, because he loved us, for the good of his church. Not for his own advantage, but for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; and because he had taken upon him to deliver man, therefore he did not abhor the virgin's womb. For the uncircumcision of our hearts he underwent circumcision; and to wash away our pollutions, he was baptized. Because man, by the temptation of Knowledge, was seduced to infidelity and disobedience, he encountered and overcame the tempter by the word of God, and by Love, keeping the commandments. Jehovah by his prophet Isaiah had foretold of him, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." The end of his Knowledge was to be the justification of his chosen. And the promise was fulfilled. For having "increased in wisdom, he went about doing good." His learning produced not a morose self-complacency, but a lovely affability, and a desire to teach others the glad tidings

tings of joy. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge were not suffered to rust and canker, locked up from the public by a supercilious reservedness, but out of them he continually dispersed abroad, and gave to the poor in spirit. Of those who came to him he rejected none, and went to those who came not. The sun at its rising found the good shepherd engaged in the care of his flock, and after it was set he did not forget them; but spent his nights in praying for those, whom his days were employed in teaching. If his wisdom instructed the ignorant, and counselled the doubtful, his power afforded relief to the broken in heart, and diseased in body, forgiving all their sins, and healing all their infirmities. His unwearied diligence in acting can only be equalled by his invincible patience in suffering. Behold him despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Behold him without guile, condemned for an impostor; without sin, sustaining the punishment due to all the sin that ever was committed. He was wounded, but it was for our transgressions; he was bruised, but our iniquities bruised him. He carried our sorrows, because he bore our sins; in his own body on the tree. There Love regained what pride had lost, and the wound made in our nature by the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, was healed by the leaves of the Tree of Life. The gates of Paradise were again unbarred, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

To combat the vain wisdom of the Greek, and the self-justifying arrogance of the Jew, the Apostles were sent forth. "The Lord gave the Word, great was the company of those who published it." The Philistine held not David in greater contempt, than was poured upon them by the Scribe and the

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disputer of this world. But they went to the attack, as David did, "in the name of the Lord of hosts;" and therefore the spear and the shield were of no account against them. God was with them, no less than with Israel before Jericho. Again the trumpet sounded, the walls again fell flat. The strong holds of false knowledge could not stand before the Gospel, and human imagination was soon captivated to the obedience of Christ. Blasted by the lightning of inspired eloquence, the arm of false philosophy withered, and lost all its hold on the minds of men. Then kings with their armies did flee, and were discomfited. They were assembled against the church, as clouds, in black and dark array, portending her utter destruction; but at God's rebuke they fled; at the voice of his word, more powerful than the thunder in the heavens, they passed by together. They saw the effects of it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. They acted the parts assigned them for a time, and then disappeared from the stage for ever. The Roman empire wondered to see itself Christian; to see the cross exalted in triumph over the globe, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. But what was it that gained this victory over the pride of earth and hell? What, but the same all-suffering, and therefore all-subduing Charity, which taught the disciples of a crucified Jesus, after his example, to endure all things for the salvation of their brethren? Inspired with that love, they counted all things, which the world could give them, but loss, that they might win souls to Christ. They renounced all riches, but the riches of grace; they sought no pleasure, but that of doing their duty; and thought it honour sufficient to serve God. Labour,

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bour, with persecution, they chose for their portion on earth; and looked for their advancement, with their Master, in the kingdom of heaven. The lamp, kindled in their hearts by the celestial fire of charity, never went out; the many waters of affliction could not quench it, neither could the floods of persecution drown it: and when the fury of the oppressor broke the earthen vessel that contained it, then was their victory, like that of Gideon, compleat.

If, in the last place, we view the unity of the primitive church, as opposed to the sad divisions and distractions since produced by heresy and schism, it will appear, that Charity built up that solid and durable edifice, so different from the airy fantastic structures of men puffed up in their fleshly minds. As, to the formation of the church, the Spirit descended upon the disciples, when "they were all with one accord in one place," so, in like manner, after more were added to them, it is remarked, for our instruction, that "the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one mind." The Spirit of unity knit all the members together, inasmuch, that if one member suffered, the rest sympathized with it, and the honour of one was the glory of all. Each had its distinct office in a due subordination, but all conspired to preserve and support the body, to which all were necessary. And thus they "grew up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, made increase of the body to the edifying itself in Love."

Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses to the truth of both

the propositions contained in the text, all the inhabitants of heaven, and the generations of men, and the spirits in the infernal prison, being engaged on the side of one or other of them, what remains, but that we endeavour to escape the punishment, by avoiding the crime, of those who bear a mournful testimony to the truth of the former; and that we aspire after the reward, by copying the example, of those who joyfully attest the certainty of the latter. It is our happiness to live in an University, endowed by the liberality of founders and benefactors, for our improvement in Knowledge. As such she has long flourished, and her renown has gone forth into all lands. Long may she so flourish, even to the years of many generations, and lift up her sacred towers, as long as the sun and the moon shall endure, above all her enemies round about: never reduced to the necessity of subsisting upon her former reputation, but still, reaping a fresh harvest from the learning of her children. Upon them all eyes are turned. The advantages they enjoy of devotion, solitude, leisure, and a mutual intercourse of study—advantages extolled and envied by all, but such as have neglected to use them—loudly call upon them to be ever vigilant, and most exceedingly zealous for the interest and honour of their common parent; to see that she decline not with a declining world, nor become infected with the corrupt and erroneous principles of a licentious and ungedly age; but that she follow after such a Knowledge as may profit, and use that Knowledge aright unto edification. For if even the Knowledge that can save, works destruction, unless brought into action by Charity, what shall we say, in the day when we are judged, should we be found to have laboured after a Knowledge

ledge that cannot save? Our founders (let it never be forgotten) were the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the friends of mankind; and if ever the glory of the one, and the good of the other directed the actions of any men, they certainly were the motives of planting these illustrious seminaries of truth and piety. Let the Knowledge that tends to promote this blessed end, such a Knowledge as Charity may employ to the use of edifying, be therefore the grand subject of all our studies, and the daily entertainment of our most serious thoughts. This wisdom is the principal thing, therefore let us get it; and with all our gettings let us get this understanding. And when, in the well spent hours of a studious retirement, we shall have secured the inestimable treasure, let Charity go forth, and disperse it abroad. For so the blessed saint of this day, having been trained to knowledge in the school of solitude, was called forth to action upon the theatre of the world. Sequestered, for a season, from the scenes of vanity and iniquity, he passed his first years in the recesses of the desert, under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, the tuition of angels, and in conversation with God by meditation and prayer. But when, in the providential disposition of men and things, the day came for his "shewing unto Israel," then he brake forth like a stream from the bowels of the earth, or the sun from a cloud, to refresh the thirsty soul with the glad tidings of the Gospel, and enlighten the world with the glorious truths of the kingdom of heaven. Hereby shewing us, that Knowledge and Charity, between them, make up the character of a minister of Christ. Charity cannot edify without Knowledge; nor will Knowledge edify without Charity. Let our retirement, therefore, resemble  
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that of the Baptist, that our manifestation also may be like his, and that as our Charity abounds in Knowledge, our Knowledge may not be unfruitful in Charity. So shall we escape the condemnation of the heretic and schismatic, by adhering to the communion of the faithful; avoid the philosophical pride of the Gentile, and the pharisaical self-sufficiency of the Jew, by writing after the copies of the Apostles; guard against the sin of our first parent, by an imitation of Jesus Christ; and finally inherit the thrones of the fallen angels, by an union with the God of Love. To which blessed estate may God of his infinite mercy bring us all, by the means of that Knowledge which worketh by Love, unto the edification of his church, and his own glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE END.



